



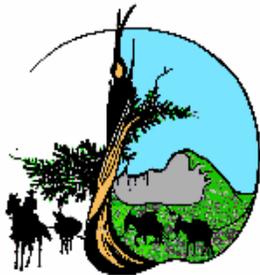
United States Department of  
Agriculture  
Forest Service



Spring Mountains National  
Recreation Area  
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

# Environmental Assessment

## Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Motorized Trails Designation Project



November, 2003





## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

### **Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Motorized Trails Project**

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Spring Mountains National Recreation Area  
Las Vegas, Nevada

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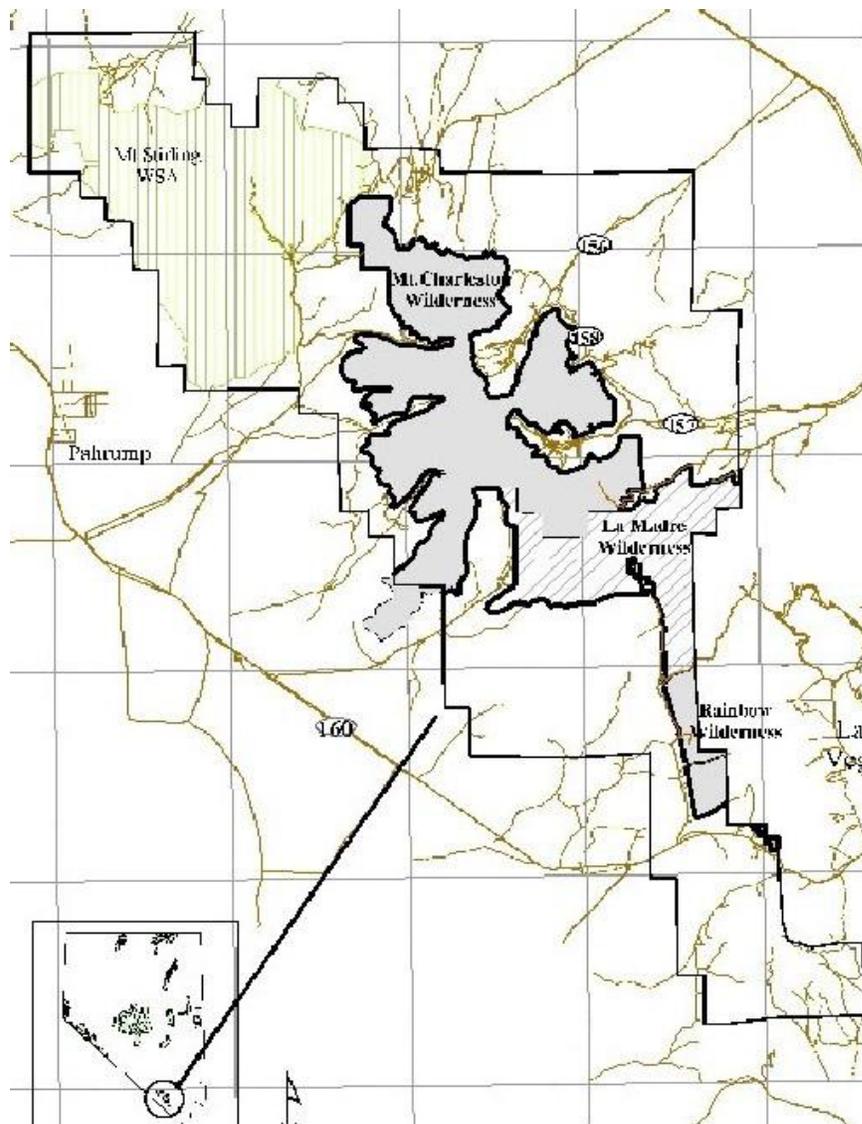
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## CHAPTER 1 – PURPOSE AND NEED

### Project Vicinity Map

The Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (Spring Mountains NRA) is located in southern Nevada between Las Vegas and Pahrump. It covers 315,488 acres of National Forest land in Clark and Nye Counties and is almost completely surrounded by federal land managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The following map displays the location of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area including the Mt. Charleston, La Madre and Rainbow Mountain Wilderness Areas.





## **NEED FOR ACTION**

### **Statement of Need for Action**

The Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (Spring Mountains NRA), Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest has determined the following needs:

- Preventing the creation of new unofficial motorized trails throughout the Spring Mountains NRA.
- Designating where off-highway vehicles can be ridden and providing clear and concise information to the public regarding off-highway vehicle use.
- Protecting over 28 endemic plant and animal species, and 57 plant and animal species of concern from unregulated off-trail vehicle use.
- Protecting areas designated as Biodiversity Hotspots from unregulated off-trail vehicle use.
- Improving water quality and increasing riparian areas (springs and streams) protection by controlling impacts from unregulated off-trail vehicle use.
- Protecting archaeological resources from unregulated off-trail vehicle use.

### **Purpose for Action**

The underlying purpose for this project is to implement direction in the 1996 *General Management Plan for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, an Amendment to the Land and Resource Management Plan, Toiyabe National Forest; The Conservation Agreement for the Spring Mountains NRA; and The Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.*

## **ASSESSMENT OF NEED FOR ACTION**

### **Existing Condition**

#### **Resources**

Years of increasing and relatively unrestricted off-highway vehicle use have resulted in a multitude of unofficial motorized trails throughout the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. Unofficial motorized trails have also resulted from wildfire suppression efforts and other activities. (Unofficial trails are roads or trails that are not part of the Forest Service Road or Trail System but were generated by vehicles being driven off-road onto undisturbed areas.) Forest Service law enforcement officers estimate that these unofficial motorized trails are expanding at the rate of ten miles per year on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.

Note: Off-highway vehicles (OHVs) include All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV's), jeeps, motorcycles, 4-wheel drive trucks and sport utility vehicles.



Forest Service resource employees have observed that some of these trails are impacting rare plant and animal species of concern identified in the Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and their habitat. Unofficial motorized trails travel through areas that are referred to as biodiversity hotspots. These are areas where a high level of endemic or rare species occurs. Biodiversity hotspots with unofficial motorized trails through them include the Willow Creek, Cold Creek, Lower Kyle Canyon, Wheeler Well and Lower Clark Canyon areas.

Forest Service resource employees and law enforcement officers have also observed that some unofficial motorized trails are damaging archaeological sites and are resulting in increased soil erosion.

Forest Service employees have observed unofficial motorized trails in riparian areas. Riparian areas are located on or near the bank of a natural course of water such as streams and springs.

### **Recreation Needs**

The southern Nevada metropolitan area continues to grow at a rapid pace with approximately 50,000 people being added to the population each year (2002 Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce report). Pahrump is the fastest growing rural unincorporated community in the United States (Pahrump Valley Chamber of Commerce). Recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding is gaining popularity in the Las Vegas area as well as nation wide. A local Las Vegas ATV and dirt bike shop recently provided information to Forest Service personnel that off-highway vehicle sales in the Las Vegas area have increased at the average rate of fifteen percent per year for the past five years.

The Spring Mountains range attracts many off-highway enthusiasts as a result of its scenery, relatively cooler climate and close proximity to Las Vegas. At the present time there are no designated routes designed specifically for off-highway riding. The result of this situation of increasing demand for off-highway riding areas and the lack of designated off-highway trails is a system of unofficial motorized trails throughout the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. A number of off-highway riders, clubs and organizations have requested that the Forest Service provide them with routes for motorized recreation and to clearly place signs to mark where off-highway vehicles can be ridden.

### **Social Setting**

There are currently no signs or educational materials informing the public about off-highway use locations and how off-highway users can recreate without impacting sensitive plant and animal species. Off-highway users are unclear where and how they can ride their vehicles in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.

### **Desired Condition**



The following desired conditions for the Spring Mountains NRA are identified in the 1996 *General Management Plan for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, an Amendment to the Land and Resource Management Plan, Toiyabe National Forest (Forest Plan)*. Many of these desired conditions are also described in *The Conservation Agreement for the Spring Mountains NRA, Clark and Nye Counties, Nevada (Conservation Agreement)*, and in *The Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (Habitat Conservation Plan)*.

### **Resources**

- Sensitive plant and wildlife species are protected (Forest Plan, Conservation Agreement and Habitat Conservation Plan).
- Riparian areas (springs and streams) are protected (Forest Plan, Conservation Agreement, and Habitat Conservation Plan).
- Water quality is improved (Forest Plan).
- Areas with high biodiversity and/or a number of species of concern called “biodiversity hotspots” are protected. (Forest Plan, Conservation Agreement, and Habitat Conservation Plan).
- There are no impacts to significant archaeological sites from recreation, roads or other uses. (Forest Plan).
- Minimal soil erosion and compaction results from recreation, roads and other uses of the Spring Mountains NRA (Forest Plan).

### **Recreation Needs**

- Motorized vehicle use only occurs on designated roads and trails (Forest Plan).
- The Spring Mountains National Recreation Area is managed for a variety of road types, including routes that offer recreation opportunities for off-highway vehicles (Forest Plan).
- Whenever possible, current recreation uses are protected, and limits are instead placed on new uses or expansion of existing uses (Forest Plan).

### **Social Setting**

- Information is provided to the public on how to recreate without impacting sensitive plant and animal species (Forest Plan, Conservation Agreement, and Habitat Conservation Plan).
- Off-highway vehicle use information and educational materials are developed and distributed to the public (Forest Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan).

## **PROPOSED ACTION**

This section describes the proposed action that was sent to the public on March 7, 2003 for comment. It was developed by the Spring Mountains National Recreation Interdisciplinary Team to meet the purpose and need for action. A proposed action is not a decision. It is merely a starting point for generating alternatives, which also meet the need for action. Upon completion of initial public scoping, alternatives to the proposed



action were developed and analyzed. The alternatives are described in Chapter 2 of the Environmental Assessment, and will be considered in the final decision after the 30-day public comment period is completed (see enclosed letter explaining the comment period dates).

The USDA Forest Service proposes that all existing unofficial motorized trails, on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, would remain open to motorized use except where they enter Wilderness. Other exceptions may include riparian areas such as creeks and springs, cultural resource sites, or biologically significant areas. Unofficial motorized trails consist of motorized trails that have a width of 38 inches or more, have been unofficially created, and are not currently part of the Forest Service's trail or road system. Unofficial motorized trails in designated roadless areas would remain open to off-highway vehicles, but would not undergo maintenance. Some off-highway motorized trails may be less than 60 inches wide and may only accommodate narrow width vehicles such as ATV's and motorcycles.

Public information signs would be installed throughout the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. They would clearly direct off-highway vehicle users to designated motorized trails where all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles and four-wheel drive vehicles can be ridden.

All other areas on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, which are not designated open for motorized use, would be closed to motorized vehicles. All motorized vehicle use would be prohibited in these areas, except by permit, under authority of 36 CFR 261.

This analysis and subsequent decision will be the first step in what may be a multi-step process to reach our goal. Forest Service personnel would continue to inventory existing motorized trails and to monitor their effects on the environment. If needed, further analysis may be conducted and additional National Environmental Policy Act analysis may be required to either designate additional motorized trails or to re-route or eliminate existing trails.

## **Public Scoping Process and Issues Considered**

Scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action.

### **Public Involvement**

Public involvement in the planning process for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Motorized Trails Project was accomplished through mailings, phone conversations and presentations/discussions with local community groups. The Scoping Notice, which included the Proposed Action and a comment form, was sent to a mailing list of 703



individuals, organizations, and agencies that have an interest in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. A media advisory was sent to Southern Nevada media explaining the project and the Forest Service's request for public input on the proposed action. An article about the project was published in the Daily Sun on March 3, 2003. Forest Service specialists were contacted to provide agency concerns and potential issues with the proposed action. A complete list of comments received and how issues were tracked through the analysis is located in Appendix A.

Information about the project proposal has been available on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest web page at [www.fs.fed.us/htnf/SMNRA](http://www.fs.fed.us/htnf/SMNRA). This web page contained a copy of the scoping notice, comment form and a map of the proposed action.

## Issues

The proposed action, developed to meet the need for action, may cause effects which conflict with various public uses or other resources managed by the Forest Service. These conflicts, called issues, are typically identified during the initial public scoping period. Issues were used to 1) generate alternatives to the proposed action; 2) generate mitigation that are listed in Chapter 2; and 3) help focus the effects analysis of implementing any of the alternatives considered, which are analyzed in Chapter 3.

**Non-significant Issues** – Please see Appendix A for issues from the public and other agencies that were not determined to be significant to the proposed action. Appendix A also includes a Forest Service response to each of these issues.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FROM THE PUBLIC AND OTHER AGENCIES**

The following issues were deemed significant to the proposed action by the Responsible Official and used to develop the alternatives presented in Chapter 2:

**Issue Statement 1:** Allowing motorized vehicles in the Mount Stirling Wilderness Study Area (WSA) violates the Bureau of Land Management's WSA Interim Management Policy and effects wilderness qualities and eligibility for future wilderness designation.

***Discussion of Public Comments:*** One agency and three organizations stated that allowing access to motorized vehicles in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area (WSA) was against the policy of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Interim Management Guidelines for Wilderness Study Areas. It was also mentioned that to allow motorized use in the WSA would affect its wilderness character and hence affect its eligibility for future wilderness designation. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 3.**

***Unit of Measure:*** The number of linear miles of motorized trails in the Mt. Stirling WSA that would be open to OHV use.



**Issue Statement 2:** Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use may negatively impact natural resources such as wildlife (including migratory birds), vegetation and soils and non-native animals such as wild horses and elk.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** Many comments were submitted from individuals and organizations about the possible impacts of the proposed action to natural resources and animals such as wild horses and elk. Several letters stated that off-highway vehicles have negative impacts on sensitive plants and wildlife and that sensitive, endangered and threatened species should be protected. Several individuals asked that the Forest Service closely analyze the possible impacts of this project to wild horses. Possible impacts to elk mating areas and effects to animals by noise and vibrations were also mentioned. One organization asked that the possible impacts to the permit granted under the Clark County Habitat Preservation Plan be determined, as well as determining how the motorized trails might impact the HCP (Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan), IMAs (Clark County Intensively Managed Areas) and LIMAs (Clark County Less Intensively Managed Areas). **This issue is addressed in Alternatives 4 and 5.**

**Unit of Measure:** The number of miles of unofficial motorized trails on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area that would be open to OHV use.



*Soil erosion on an unofficial motorized trail*

**Issue Statement 3:** OHV use may create dust and impact air quality.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** Individuals commented that motorized vehicles have negative impacts on dust management and harm native plants. Others asked that ATV's be kept 30-35 miles from the cities air-quality area and that EPA dust control standards be met. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 4.**



**Unit of Measure:** The number of miles of unofficial motorized trails on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area that would be open to OHV use.

**Issue Statement 4:** Motorized trails may affect the visual quality of the landscape.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** One organization stated that OHV use diminishes scenic value and an agency expressed concern about destruction to scenery. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 4.**

**Unit of Measure:** The number of miles of unofficial motorized trails on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area that would be open to OHV use.

**Issue Statement 5:** OHVs create noise that may affect nearby residents and other Forest users.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** An individual wrote that OHVs destroy quiet and an organization wrote that motorized vehicles have negative impacts on noise management. An individual asked that the Forest Service do a noise analysis. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 5.**

**Unit of Measure:** The number of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use within a ½ mile of private property, campgrounds, picnic areas and trails.

**Issue Statement 6:** Some trails proposed for OHV use in the Proposed Action may impact cultural resource sites.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** Several comments were received that requested protection of archaeological sites. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 5.**

**Unit of Measure:** The number of cultural resource sites that may be impacted from OHVs on unofficial motorized trails that would be open to motorized use.

**Issue Statement 7:** Motorized trails that intersect private or other Federal land boundaries may adversely affect these lands due to trespass by OHV users.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** A number of comments stated that the trails that are accessed through private property in the Cold Creek Area should be closed to OHV use. They expressed concern that these motorized trails encourage OHV use in the subdivision where they are not allowed. Other comments said that motorized trails go through private land and that OHV trespassers cross their private property. The Bureau of Land Management wrote that one unofficial motorized trail that leads to the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area should be closed as it encourages motorized use onto one of their areas that is not open to motorized vehicles. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 5.**



**Unit of Measure:** The number of private property and other Federal land intersections with unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use.

**Issue Statement 8:** Designating motorized trails in the Community of Cold Creek area may adversely impact the quality of life of Cold Creek residents due to increased noise, trespass problems, dust and safety hazards.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** A number of comments were received from private property owners in the Cold Creek Area including: close the area in and around the Cold Creek subdivision to all OHVs; trails used by OHVs cause safety problems, there are plenty of open areas between lower Cold Creek and Wheeler Well for off-road users; Cold Creek will become another dust tract, OHV use threatens the Cold Creek residents way of life, protect the tranquility of the Cold Creek area, OHVs increase traffic into the community. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 5.**

**Unit of Measure:** The number of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use within a half mile of the Community of Cold Creek.

**Issue Statement 9:** Designating motorized trails in the Inventoried Roadless Areas may result in the fragmentation of large undisturbed blocks of vegetation. Motorized trails outside of the Inventoried Roadless Areas may also result in habitat fragmentation or are redundant.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** Several comments were received that asked that the Inventoried Roadless Areas be closed to motorized vehicles and kept pristine. Another comment stated that unofficial motorized trails in these areas fragment undisturbed blocks of vegetation. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service asked that the environmental analysis assess the effects of trails that create unnecessary fragmentation or are redundant. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 6.**

**Unit of Measure:** The number of miles of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use within the Inventoried Roadless Areas.

**Issue Statement 10:** OHV use aids in spreading noxious weeds and invasive plants along motorized trails.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** Several individuals expressed concern that keeping unofficial motorized trails open to motorized use would increase the spread of noxious weeds and exotic plant species. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 4.**



**Unit of Measure:** The number of miles of unofficial motorized trails on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area that would be open to OHV use.

**Issue Statement 11:** OHV use on motorized trails is negatively impacting bio-diversity hotspots, riparian areas and sensitive species.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** Numerous individuals, organizations and agencies expressed concern that OHV use would continue to negatively affect endemic and sensitive plant species, many of which are located in biodiversity hotspots. They asked that the Forest Service better protect these species from OHV impacts. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 5.**

**Unit of Measure:** The number of miles of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use in bio-diversity hotspots and within 100 feet of riparian areas.



*Damage to Sensitive Plant Angelica Scabrada*

**Issue Statement 12:**

Continued motorized access to Nevada Department of Wildlife guzzlers on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area is needed to enable State personnel to maintain these structures that supply water to wildlife.

**Discussion of Public Comments:** The State of Nevada, Division of Wildlife asks that the Forest Service keep open to motorized use the routes to their guzzlers. They need to be able to access the guzzlers by vehicle to perform maintenance on them. **This issue is addressed in Alternative 1.**

**Unit of Measure:** The number of guzzlers that could not be accessed by motorized vehicles.



**ISSUES NOT USED TO GENERATE ALTERNATIVES BUT THEIR EFFECTS WILL BE DISCUSSED IN THIS EFFECTS ANALYSIS.**

The following issues were not used to develop the alternatives presented in Chapter 2. However, due to the nature of the issues, their effects will be discussed.

**Issue:** Closing Indian Springs Road and the road to Big Timber Spring in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area interrupts historical travel routes that are currently used for recreational purposes. *Effects of this issue are disclosed in Chapter 3, Environmental Consequences under Issue Statement #1.*

**Discussion of Public Comments:** This issue is not significant to the proposed action because the proposal showed that these routes would be open to motorized use. Members of the public and an OHV club, however, have expressed concern that these routes may be closed to motorized use through this planning process. They are especially concerned that the Indian Springs Road, which extends approximately five miles through the Wilderness Study Area, would be closed to motorized use. They claim that the Indian Springs Road is a historic route that legally cannot be closed, as it has been in existence since 1881 when it was used by pioneers to access the Indian Springs area. It is currently used by recreational OHV riders as part of a motorized loop that extends from the Cold Creek Area and back.

**Issue:** Maintain as many opportunities for motorized recreation as possible through keeping motorized trails open to OHV use. These motorized trails provide access and recreation opportunities for the general public as well as for the physically challenged. *Effects of this issue are disclosed in Chapter 3, Environmental Consequences/Effects to Factors, under Factor #1.*

**Discussion of Public Comments:** This issue is not significant to the proposed action as the proposal showed that the vast majority of unofficial motorized trails would not be closed to motorized use and access for people with physical challenges would not be affected. Several individuals expressed concern, however, that this planning process might result in the closure of unofficial motorized trails to OHV use, which would limit access to people with physical challenges.



**Issue:** Closing the motorized trail at the end of Carpenter Canyon Road interrupts historical travel routes that are currently used for recreational purposes. *Effects of this issue are disclosed in Chapter 3, Environmental Consequences under Factor #1.*

**Discussion of Public Comments:** This issue is not significant to the proposed action because the proposal did not show that the small unofficial motorized trail extension at the end of the Carpenter Canyon Road would be closed to motorized use. A comment was made to the Forest Service concerning this project that Carpenter Canyon road is to remain open to the end of where you see the road, as this is a historic route.

## Responsible Official and Decision to Be Made

The District Ranger of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest will be the responsible official and will make the decision following this environmental assessment by the USDA Forest Service. The decision to be made is what areas of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area will be available for motorized recreation opportunities as official Forest System Motorized Trails and which areas will be closed to motorized use for resource protection purposes.

(Note: The District Ranger previously made the decision to close the three small unofficial motorized trails in the Yellow Plug area for emergency archaeological site protection reasons.)



## CHAPTER 2 – ALTERNATIVE DESCRIPTION

### The Alternatives

The significant issues identified in Chapter 1 were used to develop alternatives to the proposed action and are described in Alternatives 3 through 6 below. For the purposes of this Environmental Assessment, “unofficial motorized trails” are defined as motorized trails that have a width of 38 inches or more, have been unofficially created and are not currently part of the Forest Service’s trail or road system. The Forest Service does not conduct maintenance on unofficial motorized trails. “Forest System Roads” are defined as roads of various widths and development that have been adopted by the Forest Service into their official road system. The Forest Service conducts varying levels of maintenance on Forest System Roads.

#### **Alternative 1**

Alternative 1 proposes that no motorized vehicle use will occur on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area outside of Forest System Roads and the majority of existing unofficial motorized trails, per the map of alternative 1. Vehicles off the designated Forest System roads and motorized trails would be limited to existing short distance pull-outs for the purposes of stopping, picnicking and camping. In this alternative motorized recreation opportunities would be provided on approximately 70 miles of motorized trails. Approximately 314,731 acres of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA would be closed to motorized use.

#### **Alternative 2 – No Action**

Alternative 2 proposes that no changes occur from current Forest Service motorized use management of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. All areas of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area would be open to motorized vehicle use as long as use was in accordance with existing laws and regulations, per the map of alternative 2. In this alternative motorized recreation opportunities could occur on approximately 70 miles of motorized trails. Approximately 126,195 acres of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA would be closed to motorized use.

#### **Alternative 3**

Alternative 3 proposes Alternative 1 with the exception that there would be no motorized vehicle use on unofficial motorized trails in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area, per the map of alternative 3. In this alternative motorized recreation opportunities would be provided on approximately 63 miles of motorized trails. Approximately 314,736 acres of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA would be closed to motorized use. *This alternative addresses issue statement 1*



#### **Alternative 4**

Alternative 4 proposes that all areas of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area would be closed to motorized use outside Forest System Roads, per the map of alternative 4. Vehicles off the designated Forest System roads would be limited to existing short distance pull-outs for the purposes of stopping, picnicking and camping. In this alternative motorized recreation opportunities would be provided on no motorized trails. Approximately 314,782 acres of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA would be closed to motorized use. *This alternative addresses issue statements 2,3,4,10.*

#### **Alternative 5**

Alternative 5 proposes Alternative 1 with the exception that there would be no motorized vehicle use:

- On unofficial motorized trails within a half mile of private property.
- On unofficial motorized trails within a half mile of campgrounds, Forest System hiking trails, picnic areas and Red Rock Conservation Area.
- On unofficial motorized trails within one hundred feet of riparian areas and know sensitive plant and animal locations.
- On unofficial motorized trails that travel through cultural resource sites and biodiversity hotspots.

In this alternative motorized recreation opportunities would be provided on approximately 51 miles of motorized trails. Approximately 314,745 acres of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA would be closed to motorized use, per the map of alternative 5. *This alternative addresses issue statements 2,5,6,7,8,11.*

#### **Alternative 6**

Alternative 6 proposes Alternative 1 with the exception that unofficial motorized trails within the Inventoried Roadless Areas would be closed to motorized vehicle use, per the map of alternative 6. In this alternative motorized recreation opportunities would be provided on approximately 51 miles of motorized trails. Approximately 314,745 acres of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA would be closed to motorized use. *This alternative addresses issue statement 9.*

### **Mitigations Common to Action Alternatives**

The following mitigation measures would reduce possible adverse effects on resources identified in the issue statements in Chapter 1:

1. Many areas within primitive day-use and group camping locations on the Spring Mountains NRA have been used for decades for recreation activities that involve vehicle parking. These previously disturbed areas are not shown in detail on the alternative maps and include Blue Tree, Cold Creek/Camp Bonanza, Wheeler Well, Macks Canyon (Upper), Macks Canyon (Lowers), Archery Range, CC Springs (Lovell Wash) and Lovell Wash Gravel Pit. This mitigation would continue to allow



- vehicles to park in these primitive group camping areas that are shown in Appendix B. Vehicles would be limited to parking on previously disturbed areas where no sensitive plant or animal species are present. Keeping vehicles to these disturbed areas would be accomplished through signing, fencing and using natural barriers as camping area boundaries.
2. Phased-in cultural resource surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If archaeological sites are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the site, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent damage to the site. The Forest Service will be applying for additional funding to complete these surveys.
  3. Phased-in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts. The Forest Service will be applying for additional funding to complete these surveys.
  4. The Spring Mountains NRA will be posted with signs that clearly show the public where they can and cannot ride motorized vehicles.
  5. Signposts would be placed in the ground only if a small amount of ground disturbance would occur. Additional cultural and biological surveys would be conducted prior to sign or boulder placement where more ground disturbance is involved.
  6. An archaeologist will view each location where a sign or kiosk post larger than 3 inches x 3 inches might be placed into the ground. The post locations will be moved if needed, directed by the Archaeologist, to ensure that no damage occurs to historic or prehistoric sites.
  7. A botanist will check each location where a sign or kiosk post larger than 3 inches x 3 inches might be placed into the ground. The post locations will be moved as needed, directed by the Botanist, to ensure that no damage occurs to sensitive plants.
  8. Designated motorized trails will be monitored for invasive plants and noxious weeds, with corrective action taken as needed if these plants and weeds are found on or near the trails.
  9. Following the decision a Forest Closure Order will be issued by the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Supervisor that would restrict motorized vehicles to designated motorized trails and Forest System Roads. The remaining areas of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area would be closed to motorized use. This would allow Forest Service staff, including law enforcement officers, to provide for increased resource protection.
  10. Monitoring: This environmental analysis and subsequent decision is the first step at looking at the transportation system on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. It is the initial step to meet the goal of providing OHV recreation opportunities while protecting resources. After this step, future monitoring will demonstrate if this project has been successful and if the goals are being achieved.



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If the monitoring shows that further changes are needed, additional planning processes will occur to attempt to improve the situation.



**Table 2.1 – Comparison of Effects on Issues by Alternatives**  
**The table provides a comparative analysis of effects, which are described in detail in Chapter 3. Alternative 2, the no action alternative, describes the current condition and provides a baseline to evaluate the Action Alternatives.**

Issue Statement	Alt. #1	Alt. #2 No Action	Alt. #3	Alt. #4	Alt. #5	Alt. #6
General Unit of Measure: The Spring Mountains NRA encompasses a total of 315,488 acres of land, including 79,482 acres of designated Wilderness. The following are approximate acreages, by alternative, where motorized vehicles could not be driven (vehicles could still be driven on Forest System Roads and designated motorized trails).						
Motorized vehicles should not be driven off roads and trails.	314,731 acres	79,496 acres	314,736 acres	314,782 acres	314,745 acres	314,745 acres
Issue 1 Unit of Measure: Miles of unofficial motorized trails in the Mt. Stirling WSA that would be open to OHV use.						
Allowing OHV use in the Mt. Stirling WSA violates BLMs Interim Mgmt. Policy & effects Wilderness Qualities	7 miles	7 + miles	0 miles	0 miles	7 miles	7 miles
Issue 2 Unit of Measure: Miles of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use.						
OHVs may impact wildlife, vegetation, wild horses & elk	70 miles	76 + miles	63 miles	0 miles	51 miles	51 miles
Issue 3 Unit of Measure: Miles of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use.						
OHVs create dust & impact air quality	70 miles	76 + miles	63 miles	0 miles	51 miles	51 miles
Issue 4 Unit of Measure: Miles of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to motorized use.						
Motorized trails may effect the visual quality of the landscape	70 miles	76+ miles	63 miles	0 miles	51 miles	51 miles
Issue 5 Unit of Measure: Number of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use within a half mile of private property. (There are no unofficial motorized trails within a ½ mile of campgrounds, picnic areas and hiking trails.)						
OHVs create noise that may effect nearby residences & other Forest users	21 trails	24 + trails	21 trails	0 trails	0 trails	21 trails
Issue 6 Unit of Measure: Number of cultural resource sites that may be impacted from OHVs on unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use.						
Some OHV trails may impact cultural resource sites	unknown	unknown	unknown	0 sites	unknown	unknown



Issue Statement	Alt. #1	Alt. #2 No Action	Alt. #3	Alt. #4	Alt. #5	Alt. #6
<b>Issue 7 Unit of Measure: Number of private property &amp; other Federal land intersections with unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use.</b>						
Motorized trails that intersect private or other Federal land boundaries may be effected due to trespass by OHV users	22 inter- sections	25 + inter- sections	22 inter- sections	0 inter- sections	0 inter- sections	22 inter- sections
<b>Issue 8 Unit of Measure: Number of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use within a half mile of the Cold Creek Subdivision.</b>						
Motorized trails in the Community of Cold Creek area may impact the quality of life of Cold Creek residents.	7 trails	8 + trails	7 trails	0 trails	0 trails	7 trails
<b>Issue 9 Unit of Measure: Miles of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use in the Inventoried Roadless Areas.</b>						
OHV routes in the Inventoried Roadless Areas may result in fragmentation of large undisturbed blocks of vegetation.	19 miles	19 + miles	19 miles	0 miles	19 miles	0 miles
<b>Issue 10 Unit of Measure: Miles of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use.</b>						
OHV use aide in spreading noxious weeds & invasive plants.	70 miles	76 + miles	63 miles	0 miles	51 miles	51 miles
<b>Issue 11 Unit of Measure: Miles of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use in biodiversity hotspots.</b>						
OHV use is impacting biodiversity hotspots.	1.7 miles	1.7 + miles	1.7 miles	0 miles	0 miles	1.7 miles
<b>Issue 11 Unit of Measure: Miles of unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use within 100 feet of riparian areas.</b>						
OHV use is impacting riparian areas.	0.4 miles	0.4 + miles	0.4 miles	0 miles	0 miles	0.4 miles
<b>Issue 12 Unit of Measure: Number of guzzlers that could not be accessed by motorized vehicles.</b>						
Guzzlers need to be accessed by motorized vehicles for maintenance.	1 guzzler	1 guzzler	1 guzzler	8 guzzlers	2 guzzlers	8 guzzlers

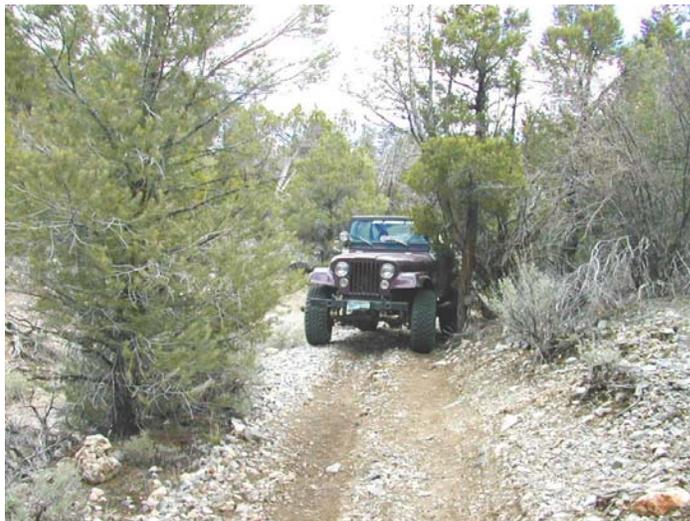
## CHAPTER 3 – ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES



The chapter will describe the environment of the areas that would be effected by the alternatives under consideration. The descriptions are no longer than is necessary to understand the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the alternatives. The environmental consequences form the scientific and analytical basis for the comparison of the alternatives. The discussion includes environmental effects that cannot be avoided, and the relationship between short term uses of the human environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long term productivity and any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

## **Environmental Consequences Related to the Key Issues**

**ISSUE STATEMENT 1:** Allowing motorized vehicles in the Mount Stirling Wilderness Study Area (WSA) violates the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) WSA Interim Management Policy and effects wilderness qualities and eligibility for future wilderness designation. (The effects of the issue of historical routes being interrupted by closing the motorized routes to Indian Springs, Big Timber Spring, Wheeler wells and Cougar Springs in the WSA, are also discussed below).



**Unofficial motorized trail in the  
Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area**

### **DISCUSSION**

This issue is complex as the land in question was transferred from BLM to Forest Service jurisdiction in 1988 and the two agencies have different management direction for areas being studied for future Congressional Wilderness designation. Information has been provided to the Forest Service from the public that some of the unofficial motorized trails in the Wilderness Study Area are historic routes that have been in existence since the late 1800's. These routes continue to be used today by motorized vehicles for recreational



purposes. Some of these routes, however, do not appear on the 1980 BLM Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area Inventory map. Below are discussions on this issue:

*A. Discussion on whether Alternative 1, which has the unofficial motorized trails in the Mt. Stirling WSA open to motorized use, violates BLMs Wilderness Study Areas Interim Management Policy.* The BLMs interim policy states that WSAs are to be managed so as not to impair their suitability for preservation as Wilderness. This applies to all uses and activities except those specifically exempted from this standard by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) such as grand fathered uses. Although some of these unofficial motorized trails do not appear on the Wilderness Study Area Inventory Map done by the BLM in 1988, they could have existing rights as they may be historic routes that have been in existence since the late 1800's. One of these routes, the route to Indian Springs, also crosses portions of the WSA that is still under BLM jurisdiction. The BLM believes that if the Forest Service allows motorized use on this route that is within the WSA portion under Forest Service jurisdiction, then the Forest Service will be encouraging motorized violations in the WSA portion under BLM jurisdiction, per their interim Management Policy.

*B. Discussion on whether the Forest Service is directed to manage the WSA under BLM's WSA Interim Management Policy.* The National Forest and Public Lands of Nevada Enhancement Act of 1988, Public Law 100-550, transferred jurisdiction of lands in the Spring Mountains from the USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the USDA Forest Service. These lands include the majority of BLM's Mount Stirling Wilderness Study Area. The law states, "Any area or portion thereof designated as a Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Area, which is made a part of the National Forest System by this Act, shall be managed by the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with the provisions of section 603© of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782)". The Federal Land Policy and Management Act under the Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study section states, "The Secretary shall continue to manage such lands according to his authority under this Act and other applicable law in a manner so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness, subject, however, to the continuation of existing mining and grazing uses and mineral leasing in the manner and degree in which the same was being conducted on October 21, 1976: Provided, That, in managing the public lands the Secretary shall by regulation or otherwise take any action required to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands and their resources or to afford environmental protection. "

*C. Discussion on whether keeping unofficial motorized trails open to OHV use in the Mt. Stirling WSA effects wilderness qualities and eligibility for future wilderness designation.* Wilderness qualities and prohibitions of certain uses in the Wilderness Act of 1964 include:

- The imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable.
- Areas provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.



- No permanent or temporary roads.
- No use of motorized vehicles or motorized equipment.

### **Effects of Alternative 1**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Please see A. and B. in the above discussion section. This alternative would not satisfy Wilderness qualities, as it would keep the Mt. Stirling WSA open to motorized use on specific trails. It also would not meet the Wilderness qualities listed in C. of the discussion section above, which may affect the WSAs eligibility for future wilderness designation. There would be no interruption to historical travel routes in the WSA as the routes to Indian Springs, Big Timber, Wheeler Wells and Cougar Springs would be open to motorized use.

### **Effects of Alternative 2**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Please see A. and B. in the discussion section above. This alternative would not meet the Wilderness qualities listed in C. of the above discussion section, which may affect the WSAs eligibility for future wilderness designation. There would be no interruption to historical travel routes in the WSA as the routes to Indian Springs, Big Timber, Wheeler Wells and Cougar Springs would be open to motorized use.

### **Effects of Alternative 3**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Please see A. and B. in the above discussion section. This alternative would satisfy the Wilderness qualities listed in C. of the discussion section above. There would be interruption to historical travel routes in the WSA since all motorized routes within the Wilderness Study Area would be closed to motorized use.

### **Effects of Alternative 4**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Please see A. and B. in the discussion section above. This alternative would satisfy the Wilderness qualities listed in C. of the discussion section above. There would be interruption to historical travel routes in the WSA since all motorized routes within the Wilderness Study Area would be closed to motorized use.

### **Effects of Alternative 5**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Please see A. and B. in the above discussion section. This alternative would not meet the Wilderness qualities listed in C. of the discussion section above, which may affect the WSAs eligibility for future wilderness designation. There would be no interruption to historical travel routes in the WSA as the routes to Indian Springs, Big Timber, Wheeler Wells and Cougar Springs would be open to motorized use.

### **Effects of Alternative 6**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Please see A. and B. in the above discussion section. This alternative would not meet the Wilderness qualities listed in C. of the discussion section above, which may affect the WSAs eligibility for future wilderness designation. There would be no interruption to historical travel routes in the WSA as the routes to



Indian Springs, Big Timber, Wheeler Wells and Cougar Springs would be open to motorized use.

**Issue Statement 2:** Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use may negatively impact natural resources such as wildlife (including migratory birds), vegetation and soils and non-native animals such as wild horses and elk.

**DISCUSSION:** This issue statement presents a list of broad topics. The following presents discussions of each topic to provide a framework for evaluating the alternative effects.

### **Wildlife**

The diversity of vertebrate wildlife (animals) in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area includes mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish and invertebrate species. The Forest Service's Region 4 Regional Forester's species list includes Threatened (3), Endangered (one potential) and Sensitive (23 vertebrate and 11 invertebrate) species plus another 55 sensitive species or species of concern as listed from the Conservation Agreement, Clark County MSHCP, and the USFWS. This is a high number and density of sensitive species relative to other Forest Service Units in Nevada.

Habitat varies from species to species and encompasses all of the needs of that species. A species depends on the total environment with its four basic components: food, water, shelter, and adequate space in sufficient quantity and quality at different times in an animal's life cycle (breeding, feeding young, migrating, hibernating, etc.) for the species to survive. A resource that is sometimes overlooked and that is difficult to quantify is "solitude" (or lack of disturbance) (Arizona Game and Fish Dept, 2003).

- Under the Migratory Bird Act of 1918 and subsequent amendments (16 U.S.C. 703-711) it is unlawful to take, kill, or possess migratory birds. Executive Order 13186 issued January 11, 2001 further defines the responsibilities of the Federal Agencies to protect migratory birds; a list of those protected birds can be found in 50 C.F.R. 10.13.

### **Noise effects on wildlife**

Noise is a general environmental factor. Animals depend on "meaningful sounds" to communicate, navigate, avoid dangers and find food. They detect these sounds against a background of general "noise. What matters in the context of this effects analysis is if OHVs produce "human-made sound that alter the behavior of animals or interferes with their normal functioning." From a legal point of view, such noise "takes" animals as per the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The most important "takes" are those that "damage" animals by harming their health or altering reproduction, survivorship, habitat use, distribution, abundance or genetic composition.

Noise can also harass animals and cause detectable changes in their behavior. From a legal standpoint, harassment includes behaviors that indicate an animal has heard a



sound, as well as behaviors that indicate aversion. However, from a common sense point of view, animals often learn to ignore noises. Therefore the term “harassment” in this report will refer to noises that threaten or cause discomfort for wildlife (Knight and Gutzwiller, 1995).

For animals of all types (mammals, birds, insects, etc.), OHV noise is probably no different from the variety of noises from any other vehicles type. Individual animals may respond differently to OHV/vehicle noises according to variables such as whether the noise is new in the animals’ habitat, loudness, whether the animal is caring for young, feeding, the variability of individual animals to noise (one may jump and another may yawn), and other variables. Animals may briefly move away from the noise and return after it when they “learn” it does not physically threaten them. They may adapt to vehicle noise and show no exterior response when they “learn” it does not physically threaten them. If animals are chased or harassed by OHVs and other vehicles they may learn to associate the noise with physical threats and take evasive action in response to noise alone.

Literature reports show that wild ungulates and carnivores have been observed to change their movements in response to aircraft overflights, snowmobile approaches, traffic on logging roads, construction noise and walking park visitors. All these sounds were associated with approaches or human activity. An omission from noise research that would provide a basis for comparison is that animals exposed to constant noise unassociated with human activity have not been studied. Some studies have shown that animals respond positively to motorized noise, for example, the sounds of snowmobiles and chain saws in winter can attract deer that come to downed trees to feed. Raptors have shown attraction to military training activities that scare up prey (Knight and Gutzwiller, 1995).

### **Elk and Wild Horses**

Elk were introduced into the Spring Mountains between 1930 and 1940 (Hall, 1946) and 80 elk were released in 1984 (Cummings, P. 2002). The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) surveyed elk in October, 2002 and counted the smallest sample since 1984. NDOW elk surveys are focused in the McFarland Burn area near the Cold Creek community because the burn area provides the best elk habitat and elk tend to be distributed on or within the proximity of the McFarland Burn. The primary factor negatively impacting the herd numbers and health is competition with wild horses. The NDOW survey counted 68 horses in the Cold Creek area and that far exceeds the Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) of 26 horses as written in the General Management Plan for the Spring Mountains NRA. The second identified factor that “has likely” influenced elk distribution is that weekend recreational use of OHVs in the Cold Creek area and on the McFarland Burn has increased by an order of magnitude in the last few years (Cummings, P. 2002).



The wild horse population in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area varies in number and moves widely throughout various habitats across private land, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management boundaries.

The total Appropriate Management Level (AML) for wild horses in the Cold Creek area is 26 horses. The AML in the Wheeler Pass area is 11 horses. (Information in the "Present Condition" section above was obtained from the USDI BLM Drought Emergency Environmental Assessment, NV-052-2002-126, 2002)

Closing unofficial motorized trails and activities in the Cold Creek and McFarland Burn area would have a beneficial effect on elk and horses because this is prime habitat for them.

### **Vegetation**

The Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan classifies the following vegetation ecosystem and acreages within the Spring Mountains NRA as follows:

- Alpine Ecosystem at 500 acres
- Bristlecone Pine Ecosystem at 13,983 acres
- Mixed Conifer Forest Ecosystem at 37,054 acres
- Pinyon-Juniper Ecosystem at 138,900 acres
- Sagebrush Ecosystem at 41,053 acres
- Blackbrush Ecosystem at 42,884 acres
- Salt Desert Scrub Ecosystem at less than 1,900 acres
- Mojave Desert Scrub at less than 4,000 acres
- Springs Ecosystem with no acreage calculated

Casual use OHV activities are listed as a primary ecosystem level threat and stressor in all ecosystems except in the Alpine ecosystem, and road and trail construction in all ecosystems except the Alpine and Bristlecone ecosystem in the Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.

### **Soils**

The majority of soils on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area are derived from limestone, dolomite and quartzite. They predominately have very gravelly loam to sandy loam surfaces. The subsurface is generally loamy-skeletal with rock content, mostly medium to large gravels.

### **Possible Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects**

Direct "exploitation" effects associated with OHVs on wildlife and vegetation includes injuring or killing animals and plants by striking them, knocking down active nests or running over dens, and similar physical impacts. Direct "exploitation" effects are probably are very low for highly mobile mammal, bird, reptile, invertebrate and other species that can quickly move out of harms way. Crawling animals such as snakes are likely to have a higher potential of being struck. A factor that probably helps keep "exploitation" effects low is that off-road driving often is done at slow speeds, allowing animals to get out of the



way. Also, off-road drivers probably watch the roadbed closely to negotiate rocks and ruts, and this may also allow them to avoid crawling animals.

Noise probably does not cause direct physical harm to the hearing of most animal species because OHV noise is usually dispersed in the out-of-doors, intermittent in occurrence, and not loud or prolonged enough to cause physical harm to an animals hearing. Many animal species are seen to feed and live in noisy environments such as along highways and airports and their hearing does not appear to be effected by vehicle noise. However it should be noted that such damage is possible. Temporary deafening from intermittent OHV noise has been shown in desert kangaroo rats. These are confined to sand dune habitats and have a highly developed sense of hearing that can detect rattlesnake scales across sand and the wing beats of owls (Berry, K. in Andrews and Novak, 1980).

Possible direct “disturbance” effects include “intentional harassment” such as chasing an animal and “unintentional” activities when animal alter normal behavior such as feeding, mating, resting, etc in reaction to passing OHV traffic and noise. These reactions vary from simple “fright” changes such as ear-turning or looking up to more severe “flight” changes as running or flying far away. Again, research shows wide variation in reactions and severity of impacts to wildlife, and that there are major knowledge gaps in behavioral ecology how individual animals to populations are effected by disturbance (Knight and Gutzwiller, 1995).

Possible indirect “habitat modification” and “pollution” effects include impacts from OHV related activities such as camping, firewood cutting and gathering, oil spills, fire rings, trash, and other impacts that cause wildlife to alter their natural behavior and that expand impacts to vegetation.

Cumulative effects result from the incremental effect of the proposed action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions.

### **Effects of Alternative 1**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Compared to the “no action” Alternative #2, this alternative would result in a reduction from the existing condition of direct and indirect effects (as described above) to wildlife, migratory birds, vegetation, soils, and non-native animals. This would be accomplished by keeping most of the existing unofficial motorized trails open for OHV use (70 out of 76 miles) while protecting natural resources in 314,731 of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA from the impacts of off-road vehicle use.

The benefits of this alternative for wildlife, migratory birds, vegetation, and non-native animals, however, are less than for Alternatives 3, 4, 5, and 6 where more miles of unofficial motorized trails would be closed to OHV use in key areas including biodiversity hotspots, Inventoried Roadless Areas, the Wilderness Study Area, riparian areas, and other areas.



The most important benefit to wildlife, vegetation and non-native animals would be that the current situation of OHVs being driven off-road and trails would cease along with their associated impacts to natural resources and their creation of new unofficial motorized trails. OHVs would be permitted only on designated forest roads and motorized trails, allowing traffic on them to be managed to minimize cumulative effects.

Benefits to soils overall would occur as this action would stop the creation of additional unofficial motorized trails and their associated impacts on soils. Over time loss of vegetative groundcover, soil displacement, compaction, erosion, and rutting on steep slopes would be reduced. There would also be reduced negative impacts to dry washes. Continued motorized use of existing unofficial motorized trails would minimize the amount of compaction and displacement to the trails themselves.

#### Cumulative Effects:

**Wilderness Designations** – In 1989, the U.S. Congress designated **43,000 acres** of National Forest land as the Mount Charleston Wilderness. In 2002, two additional Wildernesses, plus additions to the Mt. Charleston Wilderness, were designated including:

- LaMadre Mountain Wilderness (47,188 acres) that includes **19,404 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction.
- Rainbow Mountain Wilderness (24,993 acres) that includes **4,815 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction.
- Mt. Charleston Wilderness additions (14,440 acres) include **12,263 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction.

Therefore, the total acreage of Wilderness equals 79,482 acres, which is approximately 25% of the entire Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The amount of designated Wilderness in the Spring Mountains NRA is important as a cumulative effect because, by law, motorized and mechanized equipment and vehicles are prohibited in Wilderness. This increases the protection of natural resources in these areas from the impacts of vehicles traveling cross-country.

**Possible Future Visitor Center and Shuttle Services** – The Forest Service is attempting to acquire land in Kyle Canyon for a visitor center and recreation developments. Developments could include a shuttle service for Kyle and Lee Canyons on the east side of the Spring Mountains NRA. These actions may result in an overall decrease in the number of motorized vehicles driven on the Spring Mountains NRA and subsequently decrease natural resource impacts from motorized vehicle use.

Mitigation Measure: Phased in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts.

#### **Effects of Alternative 2 – No Action**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This is the “no action” alternative and it would provide the least amount of biological benefit and the maximum potential increase in the direct and



indirect effects (as described above) to wildlife, migratory birds, vegetation, soils, and non-native animals. Impacts associated with OHV use would increase because all existing unofficial motorized trails would be open to OHV use (76 out of 76 miles) and approximately 189,293 acres of the total 315,488 acres in the Spring Mountains NRA would be open to OHV use as long as use was in accordance with existing laws and regulations. This alternative would keep all existing unofficial motorized trails in biodiversity hotspots, springs, riparian areas, Inventoried Roadless Areas and the Wilderness Study Area open to OHV use.

Off-road driving would continue which would result in the creation of new unofficial motorized trails with their associated impacts (as described above) to wildlife, migratory birds, vegetation, soils, and non-native animals.

Adverse impacts to soils would occur over-time as new unofficial motorized trails would continue to be established. These trails may not be located on suitable soils or slopes nor would they be engineered to provide adequate drainage. These factors would result in loss of vegetative ground cover, soil displacement, erosion, and on slopes greater than 15 percent, the potential for rutting. Another adverse impact could be loss of hydrologic function with the spring areas where eroded soil could be deposited and fragile/sensitive areas might be irreparably damaged by OHV traffic. The negative effects could be long term to the soils as the complete removal of the effects of soil compaction could take many years due to the dry arid climate that exists in and around the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.

A factor that may result in indirect effects is the large population growth in Southern Nevada. The southern Nevada metropolitan area continues to grow at a rapid pace with approximately 50,000 people being added to the population each year (2002 Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce report). Pahrump is the fastest growing rural unincorporated community in the United States (Pahrump Valley Chamber of Commerce). Recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding is gaining popularity in the Las Vegas area as well as nation wide. Cross-country OHV driving and related negative impacts to natural resources may increase as a result because OHVs could continue to be driven cross-country in many areas of the Spring Mountains NRA under this alternative.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

### **Effects of Alternative 3**

Direct and Indirect Effects: The effects (as described above) to wildlife, migratory birds, vegetation, soils, and non-native animals would be similar to those described in Alternative #1 with the added benefit of increased protection of natural resources in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area. This alternative would keep most of the existing unofficial motorized trails open for OHV recreation opportunities (63 out of 76 miles) while protecting natural resources in 314,736 of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA from the impacts of off-road vehicle use.



Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts.

#### **Effects of Alternative 4**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would provide the maximum benefit and the least direct and indirect effects (as described above) to wildlife, migratory birds, vegetation and non-native animals because it would close all 76 miles of unofficial motorized trails to OHV use. Natural resources in 314,782 of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA would also be protected from the impacts of off-road vehicle use. This alternative would result in increased protection to natural resources in biodiversity hotspots, riparian areas, springs, Inventoried Roadless Areas, the Wilderness Study Area, the Cold Creek and McFarland Burn area (prime elk and horse habitat) and other areas.

The effects on soils would be similar to those described in Alternative 1, with the added benefit that motorized use on existing unofficial motorized trails would also cease. As a result, the trails would slowly begin to heal, through breakdown of compacted soils, and natural revegetation of the trails.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts.

#### **Effects of Alternative 5**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would provide the next highest level of reduction of direct and indirect biological effects after Alternative 4. It would reduce direct and indirect biological effects in many high quality biological sites, as it would close unofficial motorized trails to OHV use on:

- Approximately 11 miles out of a total of 19 miles of unofficial motorized trails in Inventoried Roadless Areas
- Approximately 5 out of 7 miles of unofficial motorized trails in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area
- Approximately 2 miles out of 2 miles of unofficial motorized trails in Biodiversity Hotspots
- Approximately 1 mile out of 1 mile of unofficial motorized trails at the Stirling Mine area (where sensitive bat species are documented).



Natural resources in 314,745 of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA would be protected from the impacts of cross-country vehicle use.

The direct and indirect effects on soils would be similar to those described in Alternative 1, with the added benefit of increased protection to riparian area soils. This could result in a decrease in sediment flowing to springs and streams, and less compacted areas in and around the springs.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts.

### **Effects of Alternative 6**

Direct and Indirect Effects: The effects (as described above) to wildlife, migratory birds, vegetation, and non-native animals would be similar to those described in Alternative #1 with the added beneficial effect of increased protection to natural resources in the Inventoried Roadless Areas. This alternative would keep most of the existing unofficial motorized trails open for OHV recreation opportunities (51 out of 76 miles) while protecting natural resources in 314,745 of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA from the impacts of off-road vehicle use.

The effects to soils would be similar to those described in Alternative 1, with the added benefit that there would be a decrease in soil erosion and displacement in the Inventoried Roadless Areas as there would be no OHV use on unofficial motorized trails there.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts.

**ISSUE STATEMENT 3:** OHV use may create dust and impact air quality.

The off-highway vehicle routes throughout the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area cause minor dust disturbance.

### **Effects of Alternative 1.**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would allow motorized use on about 70.2 linear miles of existing unofficial motorized trails, which equates to approximately 51 acres of disturbed land (using an estimated width of 2 yards as an average for the trails). No additional acreage would be disturbed, as the remainder of the National Recreation Area



except Forest System Roads would be closed to cross country driving. Reduced dust and improved air quality would result when compared to the existing condition.

**Effects of Alternative 2 – No Action**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would allow continued generation of off road vehicle trails and routes throughout the Spring Mountains NRA. There are a total of 75.5 miles of unofficial motorized trails present at this time. These trails are estimated to be expanding at the rate of 10% per year (the expansion rate was previously estimated to be higher but GPS work on the trails showed that there was a lower rate of expansion than initially thought).

The current use on unofficial motorized trails covers approximately 54.9 acres. In 2004 the total would be 60 acres; in 2005 66 acres; and in 2006 73 acres. Therefore, if this alternative is selected, application must be made Clark County Department of Air Quality Management for a Surface Area Disturbance permit (Nevada Revised Statute 445B). The permit is required when more than 5 new acres of surface area are disturbed and this alternative reflects expansion of more than this amount each year.

OPTION	MILEAGE	ACRES	10% 2004	10% 2005	10% 2006	10% 2007
Alternative 1	70.2	51.05	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alternative 2	75.5	54.90	60	66	73	80.4
Alternative 3	63.2	45.96	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alternative 4	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alternative 5	50.6	36.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alternative 6	51.3	37.30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Effects of Alternative 3.**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would allow motorized use on about 63.2.2 linear miles of existing unofficial motorized trails, which equates to approximately 45.96 acres of disturbed land (using an estimated width of 2 yards as an average for the trails). No additional acreage would be disturbed, as the remainder of the National Recreation Area except Forest System Roads would be closed to off road driving. Reduced dust and improved air quality would result when compared to the existing condition.

**Effects of Alternative 4.**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would not permit motorized use on any of the motorized trails, therefore, there would be a reduction of current dust and no expansion in the dust generated in the future as no routes would be available for OHV use. Reduced dust and improved air quality would result when compared to the existing condition.

**Effects of Alternative 5.**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would allow motorized use on about 50.6 linear miles of existing unofficial motorized trails, which equates to approximately 36.8 acres of disturbed land (using an estimated width of 2 yards as an average for the trails). No additional acreage would be disturbed, as the remainder of the National Recreation



Area except Forest System Roads would be closed to off road driving. Reduced dust and improved air quality would result when compared to the existing condition.

#### **Effects of Alternative 6.**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would allow motorized use on about 51.3 linear miles of existing unofficial motorized trails, which equates to approximately 37.3 acres of disturbed land (using an estimated width of 2 yards as an average for the trails). No additional acreage would be disturbed, as the remainder of the National Recreation Area except Forest System Roads would be closed to off road driving. Reduced dust and improved air quality would result when compared to the existing condition.

**ISSUE STATEMENT 4:** Motorized trails may affect the visual quality of the landscape.

Current Condition: There are motorized travel tracks on the landscape from unregulated cross-country motorized travel. These tracks will remain visible for a long time whether the route is designated open or closed to motorized use due to slow vegetative regrowth that is characteristic of this area of low rainfall. Some of these motorized travel tracks have been in existence for many years and the soils are very compacted, which further reduces the chances of natural revegetation.

#### **Effects of Alternative 1.**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be an overall beneficial effect to visual quality, as the vast majority of the Spring Mountains NRA would be closed to unregulated cross-country motorized travel. This would result in a cessation of the proliferation of additional motorized travel tracks evident on the landscape.

Other visual quality effects from potential OHV related activities including firewood cutting and gathering, oil spills, fire rings, uncleaned campsites and trash, would be reduced from the existing condition. It is anticipated that overall visual quality would continue to improve over-time as the vast majority of the 315,488 acres comprising the Spring Mountains NRA would be closed to motorized use. The visual tracks from past cross-country OHV use would slowly heal.

#### **Effects of Alternative 2:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Visual quality would be affected as OHVs would continue to be driven on most areas of the Spring Mountains NRA, outside of Wilderness areas. These OHV would continue to create new unofficial motorized trails that would generate more visual tracks on the landscape.

Visual quality effects, including potential impacts from OHV related activities such as camping, firewood cutting and gathering, oil spills, fire rings and trash, would increase from the existing condition.



In the long run visual quality impacts would continue to occur and increase across the landscape. With unregulated cross-country travel more motorized vehicles tracks would proliferate on the landscape leading to a degradation of overall visual quality over time.

A factor that may result in indirect effects is the large population growth in Southern Nevada. The southern Nevada metropolitan area continues to grow at a rapid pace with approximately 50,000 people being added to the population each year (2002 Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce report). Pahrump is the fastest growing rural unincorporated community in the United States (Pahrump Valley Chamber of Commerce). Recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding is gaining popularity in the Las Vegas area as well as nation wide. Increasing numbers of OHVs could continue to be driven cross-country in many areas of the Spring Mountains NRA under this alternative. This would result in additional motorized tracks on the landscape that may impair visual quality.

**Effects of Alternative 3, 4, 5 & 6:** The effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1.

**Issue Statement 5:** OHVs create noise that may effect nearby private property residents and other Forest users.

Discussion: Off-highway vehicles can be noisy. The amount of noise and how it effects nearby Forest users and residents would depend on the distance the person is from the OHV, the speed of the OHV and the topography. There are no motorized trails being evaluated that are within a half-mile of campgrounds, picnic areas and hiking trails. The effects analysis then will only examine the mileage of unofficial motorized trails that are within a half-mile of private property.

**Effects of Alternative 1:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Within a half-mile of the private properties there would be 21 unofficial motorized trails open to OHV use. The noise generated from OHVs being driven on these trails could be an annoyance to the people living on these properties.

No future increase in noise is anticipated from the existing condition as OHVs would be restricted to designated roads and trails only and could no longer be driven off-road near private property.

Cumulative Effects:

Home and other building construction projects on private land could temporarily increase noise levels. This might be an annoyance to private property residents and people recreating on adjacent National Forest lands.

**Effects of Alternative 2:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Within a half-mile of the private properties there would be 24 unofficial motorized trails open to OHV use. In addition, there would be new unofficial motorized trails developing overtime as OHVs would also travel off-road. The noise



generated from OHVs on these trails and off-road could be an annoyance to the people living on these properties.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described for Alternative 1.

**Effects of Alternative 3:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Within a half-mile of the private properties there would be 21 unofficial motorized trails open to OHV use. The noise generated from OHVs being driven on these trails could be an annoyance to the people living on these properties.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described for Alternative 1.

**Effects of Alternative 4:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Within a half-mile of private properties there would be zero unofficial motorized trails open to OHV use. There would be no noise impact to people living on these properties.

No future increase in motorized use noise would occur from the existing condition as OHV riders would be restricted to designated roads only and could no longer drive off-road near private property.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described for Alternative 1.

**Effects of Alternative 5:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Within a half-mile of the private properties there would be zero unofficial motorized trails open to OHV use. There would be no noise impact to people living on these properties.

No future increase in noise is anticipated from the existing condition as OHVs would be restricted to designated roads and trails only and could no longer be driven off-road near private property.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described for Alternative 1.

**Effects of Alternative 6:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Within a half-mile of the private properties there would be 21 unofficial motorized trails open to OHV use. The noise generated from OHVs being driven on these trails could be an annoyance to the people living on these properties.

No future increase in noise is anticipated from the existing condition as OHVs would be restricted to designated roads and trails only and could no longer be driven off-road near private property.

**ISSUE STATEMENT 6:** Some trails proposed for OHV use in the Proposed Action may impact cultural resource sites.



### **Effects of Alternative 1**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Only approximately 23 miles of the 76 miles of unofficial motorized trails, that would remain open to motorized use in this alternative, have been inventoried for cultural resources or traditional cultural properties. These inventories occurred as part of archaeological work on previous projects. The number of cultural resource sites that might be negatively affected by OHV use on the remaining 53 miles of unofficial motorized trails, that have not been inventoried, is unknown. A number of cultural resource sites have been identified within 3.5 miles of the 23 miles of inventoried trails and these sites would remain affected to various degrees, as OHVs could continue to drive on or near them.

Under Alternative 1, all cultural resources and traditional cultural properties, inventoried and not inventoried, on the entire Spring Mountains NRA that are not on existing Forest System Roads and the unofficial motorized trails that would remain open to motorized use, would be protected from motorized activity impacts. This alternative would result in no new unauthorized motorized trails being developed that cross prehistoric and historic sites and no OHVs driving off roads or trails onto cultural resource sites.

#### Cumulative Effects:

**Wilderness Designations** – In 1989, the U.S. Congress designated **43,000 acres** of National Forest land as the Mount Charleston Wilderness. In 2002, two additional Wildernesses, plus additions to the Mt. Charleston Wilderness, were designated including:

- LaMadre Mountain Wilderness (47,188 acres) that includes **19,404 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction.
- Rainbow Mountain Wilderness (24,993 acres) that includes **4,815 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction.
- Mt. Charleston Wilderness additions (14,440 acres) include **12,263 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction.

Therefore, the total acreage of Wilderness equals 79,482 acres, which is approximately 25% of the entire Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The amount of designated Wilderness in the Spring Mountains NRA is important as a cumulative effect because, by law, motorized and mechanized equipment and vehicles are prohibited in Wilderness. This increases the protection of cultural resources in these areas from the impacts of vehicles traveling cross-country.

**Possible Future Visitor Center and Shuttle Services** – The Forest Service is attempting to acquire land in Kyle Canyon for a visitor center and recreation developments. Developments could include a shuttle service for Kyle and Lee Canyons on the east side of the Spring Mountains NRA. These actions may result in an overall decrease in the number of motorized vehicles driven on the Spring Mountains NRA and subsequently decrease cultural resource impacts from motorized vehicle use.

Mitigation Measure: Phased-in cultural resource surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If cultural resource sites are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be



taken such as relocating the trail away from the site, closing the trail, or conducting formal data recovery processes.

### **Effects of Alternative 2 – No Action**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Alternative 2 does not change the effects that may be currently occurring to inventoried and not inventoried cultural resource sites or traditional cultural properties that are located on unofficial motorized trails. OHVs could continue to be driven over any cultural resource sites that are on these trails.

There is a potential for more cultural resources to be adversely affected, since under this alternative OHVs may be driven cross-country and off of roads and trails. These OHV activities could impact cultural resource sites and result in the creation of new unofficial motorized trails that may be on cultural resource sites.

A factor that may result in indirect effects is the large population growth in Southern Nevada. The southern Nevada metropolitan area continues to grow at a rapid pace with approximately 50,000 people being added to the population each year (2002 Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce report). Pahrump is the fastest growing rural unincorporated community in the United States (Pahrump Valley Chamber of Commerce). Recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding is gaining popularity in the Las Vegas area as well as nation wide. Cross-country OHV driving and related negative impacts to cultural resources may increase as a result because OHVs could continue to be driven cross-country in many areas of the Spring Mountains NRA under this alternative.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

### **Effects of Alternative 3:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Only 0.8 miles of unofficial motorized trail has been inventoried for cultural resources or traditional cultural properties in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area at this time, therefore the total effects of Alternative 3 to cultural resources are unknown. The cultural resources that may be in or along the unofficial motorized trails to be closed to motorized use in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area would be protected from further impacts.

The cultural resources that are known to exist outside the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area would remain affected by motorized activities on the unofficial motorized trails that would remain open to motorized use.

This Alternative may also result in increased motorized use on the trails and roads that remain open to OHV use, which may increase the potential of impacts to sites on or adjacent to these existing trails and roads.

Under Alternative 3, all cultural resources and traditional cultural properties, inventoried and not inventoried, on the entire Spring Mountains NRA that are not on existing Forest System Roads and the unofficial motorized trails that would remain open to motorized



use, would be protected from motorized activity impacts. This alternative would result in no new unauthorized motorized trails being developed that cross prehistoric and historic sites and no OHVs driving off roads or trails onto cultural resource sites.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased-in cultural resource surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If cultural resource sites are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the site, closing the trail, or conducting formal data recovery processes.

#### **Effects of Alternative 4:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: In this alternative, all unofficial motorized trails would be closed to motorized use, which would protect all known and unknown cultural resource sites on these locations from further motorized impacts. This Alternative may result in an increase of the usage of the existing Forest System Roads, that have not all been studied for the identification of cultural resource properties.

Under Alternative 4, all cultural resources and traditional cultural properties, inventoried and not inventoried, on the entire Spring Mountains NRA, that are not on existing Forest System Roads, would be protected from motorized activity impacts. This alternative would result in no new unauthorized motorized trails being developed that cross prehistoric and historic sites and no OHVs being driven off roads onto cultural resource sites.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

#### **Effects of Alternative 5**

Direct and Indirect Effects: One third or roughly 23 miles of the 76 miles of unofficial motorized trails have been inventoried for cultural resources or traditional cultural properties. This Alternative would restrict motorized access on the 3.5 miles of trail that are directly affecting 12 cultural resource sites that are currently known. For those areas that have not been inventoried, the total number of cultural sites that might be negatively affected by unofficial motorized trails that would remain open to OHV use is unknown.

Under Alternative 5, all cultural resources and traditional cultural properties, inventoried and not inventoried, on the entire Spring Mountains NRA that are not on existing Forest System Roads and the unofficial motorized trails that would remain open to motorized use, would be protected from motorized activity impacts. This alternative would result in no new unauthorized motorized trails being developed that cross prehistoric and historic sites and no OHVs driving off roads or trails onto cultural resource sites.

As in the other Alternatives, the closing of some unofficial motorized trails may cause increased usage of the trails remaining open to motorized use. This would thereby



increase the potential of impacts to sites on existing trails and roads that have not been inventoried for cultural resources.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased-in cultural resource surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If cultural resource sites are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the site, closing the trail, or conducting formal data recovery processes.

### **Effects of Alternative 6**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Approximately 23 miles of the unofficial 76 miles of motorized trails have been inventoried for cultural resources or traditional cultural properties on the Spring Mountains NRA. Approximately 2 miles of these are in the Inventoried Roadless Areas that leaves the total effects of Alternative 6 on cultural resource properties unknown.

In addition to five identified cultural sites, only the cultural resources that may be in or along the unofficial motorized trails in the Inventoried Roadless Areas would be protected from further impacts. For those areas not inventoried, the number of cultural resource sites that might be negatively affected by unofficial motorized trails that would remain open to OHV use is unknown.

Under Alternative 6, all cultural resources and traditional cultural properties, inventoried and not inventoried, on the entire Spring Mountains NRA that are not on existing Forest System Roads and the unofficial motorized trails that would remain open to motorized use, would be protected from motorized activity impacts. This alternative would result in no new unauthorized motorized trails being developed that cross prehistoric and historic sites and no OHVs driving off roads or trails onto cultural resource sites.

As in the other Alternatives, the closing of some trails may cause increased usage of the trails remaining open. This would thereby increase the potential of adverse impacts to sites on existing trails and roads that have not been inventoried.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased-in cultural resource surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If cultural resource sites are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the site, closing the trail, or conducting formal data recovery processes.

**ISSUE STATEMENT 7:** Motorized trails that intersect private or other Federal land boundaries may adversely affect these lands due to trespass by OHV users.

### **Effects of Alternative 1:**



Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be 22 intersections where unofficial motorized trails meet private and other federal properties. Some private properties would be adversely affected as a result of unofficial motorized trails being open to motorized use that lead to these locations. Some OHV riders comply with private property no trespassing signs and some do not. If a motorized trail leads to private property there may be some trespass problems. On the other hand, there may also be some benefits to private property owners who ride OHVs and like to access Forest motorized trails directly from their property.

There is one unofficial motorized trail that leads to an area of Red Rock Conservation Area that is managed by the BLM as a non-motorized area. This action might result in vehicles trespassing onto BLM land and violating their rules.

No future increase in OHV private property trespass problems are anticipated from the existing condition since OHV riders would be restricted to designated roads and trails only and could no longer drive cross country near private property. Clear signing and public information on the Spring Mountains NRA will inform OHV riders as to where they can and cannot ride.

**Effects of Alternative 2:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be at least 25 intersections where unofficial motorized trails meet private and other federal properties. The effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1.

A future increase in OHV use near private property could create the adverse effect of more private property trespass problems due to more OHV being driven off-road near private property.

**Effects of Alternative 3:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be 22 intersections where unofficial motorized trails meet private and other federal properties. The effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1.

**Effects of Alternative 4:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be zero intersections where unofficial motorized trails meet private and other federal properties. There would be positive effects to some private properties and to Red Rock Conservation Area as there would be no unofficial motorized trails on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area leading to these locations. All vehicle use would remain on Forest System Roads. On the other hand, private property owners would no longer be able to ride their Ohms onto the Forest outside of Forest System Roads.

**Effects of Alternative 5:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be zero intersections where unofficial motorized trails meet private and other federal properties. There would be positive effects to some



private properties and to the Red Rock Conservation Area as all motorized trails would stop at least a half-mile outside of private property and the motorized trail to Red Rock Conservation Area would be closed to OHV use. On the other hand, private property owners would no longer be able to ride their Ohms onto the Forest directly from their subdivision or property.

**Effects of Alternative 6:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be 22 intersections where unofficial motorized trails meet private and other federal properties. The effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1.

**Issue Statement 8:** Designating motorized trails in the Community of Cold Creek area may adversely impact the quality of life of Cold Creek residents due to increased noise, trespass problems, dust and safety hazards.

**DISCUSSION**

Cold Creek is a small mountain community entirely surrounded by National Forest land. The area around Cold Creek is a popular location for OHV riding as OHV enthusiasts come to the area for its cooler temperatures and scenic riding opportunities. Many OHV riders stage in parking areas approximately a half-mile from Cold Creek and ride on both Forest System roads and unofficial motorized trails. Some residents claim that OHV riders cross from public land onto their private properties causing trespass problems. Some residents of Cold Creek also have OHVs and ride from their properties out onto the National Forest.

The Forest Service has received numerous letters from Cold Creek residents asking that some of the unofficial motorized trails in the vicinity be closed to motorized use. They state that OHV recreational activity in the area is negatively affecting their lives and properties. Safety hazards are addressed under Factor 2.



Community of Cold Creek

**Effects of Alternative 1:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be seven unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use within a half-mile of the Community of Cold Creek. Noise, trespass problems and dust from OHVs being driven on these trails could be an annoyance to the residents of Cold Creek. If Ohms are being driven fast or there are slippery or unsafe trail conditions, there could also be safety problems.

No future increases in OHV noise, private property trespass problems, safety problems or dust effecting Cold Creek private property owners would be anticipated from the existing condition since Ohms would be restricted to designated roads and trails only and could no longer drive off-road near private property.

Cumulative Effects:

Home and other building construction projects on private land could temporarily increase noise levels. This might be an annoyance to private property residents.

**Effects of Alternative 2:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be eight unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use within a half-mile of the Community of Cold Creek. In addition, there would be new unofficial motorized trails developing over time as Ohms would also travel off-road. The effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1.

This alternative may result in future increases in OHV use near the Community of Cold Creek. This could result in increased noise, trespass problems, dust and safety hazards since OHVs could continue to be driven off-road near these private properties.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.



### **Effects of Alternative 3:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be seven unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use within a half-mile of the Community of Cold Creek. Noise, trespass problems and dust from OHVs being driven on these trails could be an annoyance to the Cold Creek residents. If OHVs are being driven fast or there are slippery or unsafe trail conditions, there could also be a safety problem.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

### **Effects of Alternative 4:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be zero unofficial motorized trails that would be open to motorized use within a half-mile of the Community of Cold Creek. There would be some benefits to the Cold Creek private property owners, as noise, trespass problems, and dust from OHVs would be decreased.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

### **Effects of Alternative 5:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be zero unofficial motorized trails that would be open to OHV use within a half-mile of the Community of Cold Creek. There would be some benefits to the Cold Creek private property owners as noise; trespass problems and dust from OHVs would be decreased.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

### **Effects of Alternative 6:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: The effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

**Issue Statement 9:** Designating motorized trails in the Inventoried Roadless Areas may result in the fragmentation of large undisturbed blocks of vegetation. Motorized trails outside of the Inventoried Roadless Areas may also result in habitat fragmentation or are redundant.

## **DISCUSSION**

Habitat fragmentation and its effects on wildlife and plant species is a large and complex topic. In general, fragmentation creates "islands" within unfragmented habitat and may have negative species effects such as limiting access to food sources and reproductive opportunity, disruption of seasonal migrations and prevention of genetic exchange between populations (The Nature Conservancy, 2002). Yet fragmentation literature presents conflicting information where some native species respond positively to fragmentation. As a general statement, specialist species that require large unfragmented



habitat will decline in response to fragmentation, whereas more generalist species may respond positively. (California Partners in Flight, 2002). Understanding how individual species respond requires long-term species by species research.

OHV trails and activities fragment natural habitat by creating corridors of artificial habitat through them. These alter the continuity of natural habitat by changing such factors as temperature, light, wind, noise, water flows, and soil structure that may result in the introduction and dispersion of new species (weeds, brown-headed cowbirds, etc.) and/or the loss of native species. These different fragmentation and penetration situations are spread across the Spring Mountains NRA, and the amount of direct, indirect, and cumulative effects vary according to many factors including the length of the motorized trail, the sensitivity of the habitat, and other factors for different alternatives

No specific unofficial motorized trails have been identified as having specific habitat fragmentation impacts. However, for purposes of reducing habitat fragmentation, the most desirable alternatives would be those that close the most miles of unofficial motorized trails in Inventoried Roadless Areas, wilderness study areas, and biodiversity hotspots. These areas include the majority of the land area, the largest intact natural habitats, and the highest priority biological sites within the Spring Mountains NRA.

### **Effects of Alternative 1**

Direct and Indirect Effects: No specific unofficial motorized trail has been identified as having specific habitat fragmentation impacts. Compared to the “no action” Alternative #2, this alternative might provide a reduction in habitat fragmentation.

There are approximately 19 miles of unofficial motorized trail that may have slight habitat fragmentation impacts within the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area’s Inventoried Roadless Areas as follows:

1. One unofficial motorized trail crosses an area within about a 0.9 mile loop near the Bill Smith Springs (in the northwest corner of the Spring Mountains NRA).
2. Twenty-three unofficial motorized trails totaling approximately 11.8 miles penetrate and dead-end into Inventoried Roadless Areas over the entire Spring Mountains NRA. These range from 0.1 to about 1.5 miles long (an average of about 0.5 miles in length).
3. Three unofficial motorized trails cross segments of Inventoried Roadless Areas by being attached to Forest System Roads including:
  - About a 2.0 mile unofficial motorized trail loop off of Forest System Road #45577 (to the north of Kyle Canyon Road)
  - About a 3.5 mile unofficial motorized trail that connects Forest System Roads #45539 and #45538, immediately east of the 17,000 acre Inventoried Roadless Area block of land, and crosses an Inventoried Roadless Area there.
  - About a 0.8 mile trail connects Forest System Roads #45581 and #45536, to the southeast of the 17,000-acre Inventoried Roadless Area block of land, and crosses an Inventoried Roadless Area there.



The Spring Mountains National Recreation Area's General Management Plan specifically identifies part of one Inventoried Roadless Area to be established as an area to be maintained in an unfragmented condition in Management Area 13 as Standard (13.2) "Maintain large undisturbed blocks of vegetation in an unfragmented condition without new roads or motorized trails including: Lovell Wash/Yount/Rose Springs area (T.21S, R.57E, Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 17, 18, 19, 30; T.21S, R. 56E, Sections 1,2, 10-17, 20-27)." This area includes 28 Sections at 640 acres each, and totals 17,920 acres. This is slightly less than 6% of the total 315,488 Spring Mountains National Recreation Area acreage. No unofficial motorized trail fragments off a portion of this area, however, one Forest System road penetrates into the southwest corner: Designated Forest System Road #45542 penetrates for 1.4 miles and an unofficial motorized trail goes from the end of the Forest Road for about another 1.0 mile. This probably has a relatively insignificant fragmentation effect relative to the overall 17,000 acre block.

Maps of the unofficial motorized trail system show almost no instances of redundant motorized trails (i.e. parallel or duplicate trails to the same destinations), especially in sensitive biological areas. Redundant motorized trails appear to only occur to a small degree in the area around the Community of Cold Creek.

The largest benefit would be that the existing condition of OHVs being driven off-roads and trails would cease, thereby reducing the potential for future habitat fragmentation from OHV use across the entire Spring Mountains NRA.

### **Effects of Alternative 2**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This "no action" alternative would provide the maximum potential for fragmentation because it would keep all existing unofficial motorized trails open to OHV use (76 out of 76 miles) including all 19 miles in Inventoried Roadless Areas. It would also keep unofficial motorized trails open to OHV use in biodiversity hotspots, springs, riparian areas and wilderness study areas, which could result in some habitat fragmentation.

There would be increased potential for future habitat fragmentation from OHV use, as continued off-road driving would result in the creation of more unofficial motorized trails in the Inventoried Roadless Areas as well as in biologically sensitive biodiversity hotspots, springs and riparian areas.

### **Effects of Alternative 3**

Direct and Indirect Effects: The effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1 with the added benefit of reducing the potential for habitat fragmentation in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area.

### **Effects of Alternative 4**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would have the maximum beneficial effect of reducing habitat fragmentation from the existing condition because it would close to OHV



use all 76 miles of unofficial motorized trails, including those in Inventoried Roadless Areas, biodiversity hotspots, riparian areas, springs, wilderness study areas, the Cold Creek and McFarland Burn area (prime elk and horse habitat), and other areas.

### **Effects of Alternative 5**

Direct and Indirect Effects: The effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1 with the added benefit of reducing the potential for habitat fragmentation in biologically sensitive riparian areas and biodiversity hotspots.

### **Effects of Alternative 6:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: The effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1 with the added benefit of reducing the potential for habitat fragmentation in the Inventoried Roadless Areas.

**Issue Statement 10:** OHV use aids in spreading noxious weeds and invasive plants along motorized trails.

### **DISCUSSION:**

OHVs are one of many sources that may introduce noxious weed and invasive plant species into new areas as seeds may be unwittingly transported on the undercarriage, tires, and other parts of the vehicles. OHVs are of particular concern because driving off-road increases the potential for driving through weed and invasive plant populations and picking up fruits, seeds, and plant parts, and transporting them into new areas.

Examples of noxious weed species that may have been introduced and/or which could be spread into the Spring Mountains NRA by OHVs include Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*), salt-cedar, (*Tamarix ramoissisima*), Russian olive (*Eleagnus angustifolius*), mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) (Beyer, C. 2001. Weed List for the Spring Mountains NRA). and gumweed (*Grindelia squarrosa*). In a survey of 104 unofficial motorized trails in the northeast part of the Spring Mountains NRA, cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) and other "non-native grasses" were specifically identified along 4 and 11 unofficial trails respectively (Hundt and Rademaker, 1999).

Weed and invasive plant introductions will be a constant factor in the Spring Mountains NRA, however, identification and control of infestations are more likely to occur by maintaining a designated motorized trail system and patrolling it for weeds.

The most desirable alternatives would be those that provide the most protection by closing the most miles of unofficial motorized trails, especially those in sensitive biological areas such as biodiversity hotspots, riparian areas, and springs.

### **Effects of Alternative 1**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Compared to the "no action" Alternative #2, this alternative would reduce the potential for noxious weed and invasive plant infestations as approximately 314,731 acres of the 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA would be



closed to motorized use. OHV use would be restricted to Forest System Roads and designated motorized trails. Some of these motorized trails, however, are in biodiversity hotspots and riparian areas where the protection of sensitive species from invasive plants is especially important.

The largest benefit would be that the existing condition of off-road OHV riding would cease in the future and OHVs would be permitted only on existing designated Forest Roads and motorized vehicle trails. Identification and control of future noxious weed and invasive plant infestations are more likely to occur by maintaining a designated motorized trail system and patrolling it for weeds.

Mitigation Measures: Designated motorized trails will be monitored for invasive plants and noxious weeds, with corrective action taken as needed if these plants and weeds are found on or near the trails.

### **Effects of Alternative 2**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This “no action” alternative would provide the least level of biological protection from noxious weeds and invasive plants. Noxious weeds and invasive plants could be spread along existing unofficial motorized trails as well as to many other locations on the Spring Mountains NRA. Some of these motorized trails and areas used for off-road driving are in biodiversity hotspots and riparian areas where the protection of sensitive species from invasive plants is especially important

Effects include a potential future increase in the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants as OHVs, when driven off-road, travel through weed populations where they may pick up weed fruits, seeds, and plant parts, and transport them into new areas.

A factor that may result in indirect effects is the large population growth in Southern Nevada. The southern Nevada metropolitan area continues to grow at a rapid pace with approximately 50,000 people being added to the population each year (2002 Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce report). Pahrump is the fastest growing rural unincorporated community in the United States (Pahrump Valley Chamber of Commerce). Recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding is gaining popularity in the Las Vegas area as well as nation wide. Increasing numbers of OHVs could continue to be driven off roads and trails in many areas of the Spring Mountains NRA under this alternative. This increase in cross-country driving increases the potential for driving through weed and invasive plant populations and picking up fruits, seeds, and plant parts, and transporting them into new areas.

### **Effects of Alternative 3:**

Direct and Indirect Effects and Mitigation Measures: would be similar to those described in Alternative 1.



#### **Effects of Alternative 4**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would provide the maximum benefit to reduce the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants because it would close to OHV use all 76 miles of unofficial motorized trails including those in biodiversity hotspots, riparian areas, springs, Inventoried Roadless Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, the Cold Creek and McFarland Burn area (prime elk and horse habitat) and other areas. The current situation of OHVs being driven off-roads and trails and aiding in the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants in these areas would cease.

There would be future benefits towards controlling the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants from motorized use as 314,745 acres of the total 315,488 acres of the Spring Mountains NRA would be inaccessible to off-highway vehicles.

Mitigation Measures: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

#### **Effects of Alternative 5**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1 and would provide the next highest level of biological protection after Alternative #4 because it also would provide sensitive biological areas such as biodiversity hotspots and riparian areas a higher degree of protection from noxious weeds and invasive plants.

Mitigation Measures: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

#### **Effects of Alternative 6**

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: Effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1 with the added benefit of increased protection of the Inventoried Roadless Areas from the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants.

Mitigation Measures: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

**Issue Statement 11:** OHV use on motorized trails is negatively impacting biodiversity hotspots, riparian areas, springs and sensitive species.

### **DISCUSSION**

Nevada Natural Heritage sensitive species GIS data layers were overlaid on the project maps. They show no correlation and almost no occurrences of sensitive species with unofficial motorized trails on any of the alternatives. There is a high correlation with sensitive species with biodiversity hotspots and along designated Forest System Roads.

Sensitive species surveys have been conducted for a variety of species and have shown they are widely distributed throughout the Spring Mountains NRA. Many species, however, have not been extensively surveyed and the surveys that have been done have not been conducted over enough potential habitat and over enough years to understand the ecology of each species.



Sensitive species surveys have not been conducted along unofficial motorized trails except for the following: The Spring Mountains National Recreation Area and the Las Vegas Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management conducted a survey to evaluate the impacts of unofficial motorized trails for a dozen variables (sensitive species, trash, erosion, etc.) in the northeast portion of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (from the Kyle Canyon Road up through the northeast portion of the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area). Three sensitive plant species were found within 15 feet along 16 of the Spring Mountains NRAs 63 unofficial motorized trails. Two species, Clokey paintbrush (*Castilleja martinii* var *clokeyi*) and Clokey milkvetch (*Astragalus aequalis*) occurred “intermittently” along 13 unofficial motorized trails and 2 unofficial motorized trails respectively, and thirty halfring milkvetch plants occurred at the terminus of one unofficial motorized trail. The authors recommended further surveys earlier in the season because they suspected that other sensitive plants might occur along another 27 unofficial motorized trails (Hundt and Rademacher, 1999). Research is needed to determine whether these occurrences are because of the motorized trail and OHV activity or if the plants are persisting in spite of them.

### **Biodiversity Hotspots**

There are 39 Biodiversity Hotspots plus 10 single species sites identified in the Spring Mountains NRA (Nachlinger, 1994). A total of 1.7 miles of unofficial motorized trails occur in 7 biodiversity hotspots with the largest amount in the Wheeler Well hotspot.

### **Riparian Areas and Springs**

A total of 26 springs and riparian areas show unofficial motorized trails going to within 100 feet of them.

Big Timber Springs is located in the Mount Stirling Wilderness Study Area and surveys have documented a high number of sensitive species there. Butterfly surveys in 1999 documented *Limenitis weidermeyer* - Nevada admiral and *Hesperia comma*, and bat surveys documented six sensitive bat species at Big Timber Spring Small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*), Long-eared bat (*Myotis evotis*), Fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), Long-legged myotis (*Myotis volans*), and Big-free-tailed bat (*Nyctinomops macrotis*) within the Area (O’Farrell 2/2002, O’Farrell 12/2002, Ramsey 1997).

### **Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species**

There are 3 threatened animal species, 1 potential endangered animal species, 38 sensitive animal species, and 46 sensitive plant species in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (R4 Regional Forester’s TEPS List, 1999; Conservation Agreement, 1998; Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, 2001; US Fish and Wildlife Service TES List, 2002).

No Endangered or Threatened species are shown to be associated with, or anticipated to be affected by, unofficial motorized trails in the Spring Mountains NRA.



The most desirable alternatives would be those that provide the most protection to natural resources by closing to OHVs the most miles of unofficial motorized trails, especially in areas with high occurrences of sensitive species such as biodiversity hotspots, riparian areas and springs.

### **Effects of Alternative 1**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Compared to the “no action” Alternative #2, this alternative would provide beneficial protection to sensitive species as 314, 731 acres out of the total 315,488 acres in the Spring Mountains NRA would be off-limits to OHVs and their associated impacts to natural resources.

There are no anticipated effects to threatened or endangered species.

The benefits to sensitive species, however, would be less than for Alternatives 4 and 5 as these actions would close to OHV use more miles of unofficial motorized trails in key biological areas including biodiversity hotspots, Inventoried Roadless Areas, wilderness study areas and riparian areas.

The largest benefit would be increased protection of sensitive species over time from OHV impacts. The current situation of OHVs being driven off-roads and trails would cease, thereby reducing their potential impact to sensitive species.

### Cumulative Effects:

**Wilderness Designations** – In 1989, the U.S. Congress designated **43,000 acres** of National Forest land as the Mount Charleston Wilderness. In 2002, two additional Wildernesses, plus additions to the Mt. Charleston Wilderness, were designated including:

- LaMadre Mountain Wilderness (47,188 acres) that includes **19,404 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction.
- Rainbow Mountain Wilderness (24,993 acres) that includes **4,815 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction.
- Mt. Charleston Wilderness additions (14,440 acres) include **12,263 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction.

Therefore, the total acreage of Wilderness equals 79,482 acres, which is approximately 25% of the entire Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The amount of designated Wilderness in the Spring Mountains NRA is important as a cumulative effect because, by law, motorized and mechanized equipment and vehicles are prohibited in Wilderness. This increases the protection of natural resources in these areas from the impacts of vehicles traveling cross-country.

**Possible Future Visitor Center and Shuttle Services** – The Forest Service is attempting to acquire land in Kyle Canyon for a visitor center and recreation developments. Developments could include a shuttle service for Kyle and Lee Canyons on the east side of the Spring Mountains NRA. These actions may result in an overall decrease in the number of motorized vehicles driven on the Spring Mountains NRA and subsequently decrease natural resource impacts from motorized vehicle use.



Mitigation Measure: Phased in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts.

### **Effects of Alternative 2**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This “no action” alternative would provide the least level of biological benefit and the maximum potential increase in direct, indirect effects to sensitive species because it would keep all existing unofficial motorized trails open to OHV use (75.5 out of 75.5 miles) including trails in biologically sensitive areas such as biodiversity hotspots, springs, riparian areas, Inventoried Roadless Areas and wilderness study areas. It would also allow for increased off-road driving that would result in the creation of additional unofficial motorized trails and potential impacts to sensitive species.

Off-road driving would continue in the future which would result in the creation of new unofficial motorized trails with their potential impacts to natural resources including sensitive, threatened and endangered species.

A factor that may result in indirect effects is the large population growth in Southern Nevada. The southern Nevada metropolitan area continues to grow at a rapid pace with approximately 50,000 people being added to the population each year (2002 Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce report). Pahrump is the fastest growing rural unincorporated community in the United States (Pahrump Valley Chamber of Commerce). Recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding is gaining popularity in the Las Vegas area as well as nation wide. Cross-country OHV driving and related negative impacts to biodiversity hotspots, riparian areas and sensitive species may increase as a result because OHVs could continue to be driven cross-country in many areas of the Spring Mountains NRA under this alternative.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

### **Effects of Alternative 3**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1 with the added beneficial effect of increased protection of sensitive species in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts.

### **Effects of Alternative 4:**



Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would provide the maximum protection to sensitive species because it would close to OHV use all 76 miles of existing unofficial motorized trails including those in biodiversity hotspots, riparian areas, springs, Inventoried Roadless Areas, the Wilderness Study Area and the Cold Creek and McFarland Burn area (prime elk and wild horse habitat).

There are no anticipated effects to threatened or endangered species.

The largest benefit would be increased protection for sensitive species over time from OHV impacts. The current situation of OHVs being driven off-roads and trails would cease, thereby reducing their potential impact to sensitive species.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts.

#### **Effects of Alternative 5**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would provide the next highest level of reduction of biological effects compared to Alternative 4 because it focuses unofficial motorized trail OHV closures to high quality biological sites including 1.7 miles out of 1.7 miles in Biodiversity Hotspots, 10.9 miles out of a total of 18.9 miles in Inventoried Roadless Areas, 5.3 out of 7.0 miles of trails in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area and 1.0 miles at the Stirling Mine where sensitive bat species are documented.

There are no anticipated effects to threatened or endangered species.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts.

#### **Effects of Alternative 6**

Direct and Indirect and Effects: Effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1 with the added beneficial effect of increased sensitive species protection in the Inventoried Roadless Areas.

Cumulative Effects: Similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measure: Phased in biological surveys will be completed for designated motorized trails. If impacts to threatened, endangered or sensitive species are found on



the trails, mitigation actions will be taken such as relocating the trail away from the plants or animals, closing the trail, or other mitigation measures that would prevent impacts.

**ISSUE STATEMENT 12:**

Continued motorized access to Nevada Department of Wildlife guzzlers on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area is needed to enable State personnel to maintain these structures that supply water to wildlife.



**DISCUSSION**

Nevada Department of Wildlife has 12 wildlife guzzlers on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. They are an important water supply for wildlife, especially during dry months and in drought years.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife needs continued motorized access to guzzler locations for maintenance. Project maps show either an unofficial motorized trail or a Forest System Road leading to 11 of the 12 guzzlers. There is one guzzler, however, that the maps show no unofficial motorized trail or Forest System Road leading to.

**Effects of Alternative 1**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Seven of the guzzlers could continue to be accessed on unofficial motorized trails and 4 guzzlers could continue to be accessed on Forest System Roads. One guzzler has no mapped road or trail leading to it and thus could not be accessed by motorized vehicles. 11 of the 12 guzzlers could continue to be maintained. One guzzler may have to be moved to a different location.



Cumulative Effects: No cumulative effects are anticipated.

### **Effects of Alternatives 2 & 3**

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: Effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1.

Cumulative Effects: No cumulative effects are anticipated.

### **Effects of Alternative 4**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Four of the guzzlers would continue to be accessed on Forest System Roads. 8 of the guzzlers would not be accessible by motorized vehicles. The Nevada Department of Wildlife would be unable to maintain 8 guzzlers and they may need to be moved to different locations.

Since the Nevada Department of Wildlife would be unable to maintain these guzzlers they would eventually be unable to supply water to wildlife. This might result in a decline in wildlife populations.

Cumulative Effects: No cumulative effects are anticipated.

### **Effects of Alternative 5**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Six of the guzzlers could continue to be accessed on unofficial motorized trails, 4 guzzlers could continue to be accessed on Forest System Roads and 1 guzzler could not be accessed by motorized vehicles. 1 guzzler has no mapped road or trail leading to it and thus could not be accessed by motorized vehicles. 10 of the 12 guzzlers could continue to be maintained. Two of the guzzlers may need to be moved to different locations.

Cumulative Effects: No cumulative effects are anticipated.

### **Effects of Alternative 6**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Four of the guzzlers could continue to be accessed on Forest System Roads. Eight of the guzzlers would not be accessible by motorized vehicles as they are located in the Inventoried Roadless Areas.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife would be unable to maintain 8 of the 12 guzzlers and they may need to be moved to different locations.

Since the Nevada Department of Wildlife would be unable to maintain these guzzlers they would eventually be unable to supply water to wildlife. This might result in a decline in wildlife populations.

Cumulative Effects: No cumulative effects are anticipated.



## Environmental Consequences/Effects Related to Required Analysis Factors

For each alternative, information is displayed here that is necessary to support each of the required findings in the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) (reference 40 CFR 1508.27(b)).

### **Factor 1- Beneficial and adverse impacts:**

Many beneficial and adverse impacts are analyzed for each alternative under the preceding issue statements.

Beneficial and adverse effects are described in this section on the issues of maintaining as many opportunities for motorized recreation as possible and providing access and recreation opportunities for the physically challenged. Also disclosed are the effects to the historical travel route at the end of Carpenter Canyon.



### **Effects of Alternative 1:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be many motorized recreation opportunities for the general public as well as for those with physical challenges with this action. The majority of unofficial motorized trails on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, approximately 70 miles, would remain open to OHV use.

Effects on Carpenter Canyon: There would be no effect to the historical travel route at the end of Carpenter Canyon, as it would be available for motorized use.

### **Effects of Alternative 2:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would provide the most motorized recreation opportunities for the general public as well as for those with physical challenges as OHVs



could basically be driven anywhere as long as they stayed out of designated Wilderness areas and weren't doing resource damage. All unofficial motorized trails on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, approximately 75 miles, would remain open to OHV use.

Effects on Carpenter Canyon: There would be no effect to the historical travel route at the end of Carpenter Canyon, as it would remain open to motorized use. Potential and probable significant impacts would occur to sensitive species and cultural resource sites on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area as additional trails would be created and OHV use would be unregulated.

**Effects of Alternative 3:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects would be similar to those described in Alternative 1 although there would be no OHV riding on the approximately 7 miles of unofficial motorized trails in the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area. This would effect OHV riding opportunities on the motorized trail route called the "Indian Springs Road" that is part of a popular OHV motorized trail loop that extends from the Cold Creek area and back.

Effects on Carpenter Canyon: There would be no effect to the historical travel route at the end of Carpenter Canyon, as it would be available for motorized use.

**Effects of Alternative 4:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be limited motorized recreation opportunities for the general public as well as for those with physical challenges with this action. The approximately 75 miles of existing unofficial motorized trails would be closed to motorized use.

Effects on Carpenter Canyon: There would be an effect to the historical travel route at the end of Carpenter Canyon, as it would be closed to motorized use just before the Carpenter Creek crossing.

**Effects of Alternative 5:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be motorized recreation opportunities for the general public as well as for those with physical challenges with this action. Approximately 51 miles of existing unofficial motorized trails on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area would remain open to OHV use.

Effects on Carpenter Canyon: There would be an effect to the historical travel route at the end of Carpenter Canyon, as it would be closed to motorized use just before the Carpenter Creek crossing.

**Effects of Alternative 6:**

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be motorized recreation opportunities for the general public as well as for those with physical challenges with this action. Approximately



53 miles of unofficial motorized trails on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area would remain open to OHV use.

Effects on Carpenter Canyon: There would be no effects to the historical travel route at the end of Carpenter Canyon, as it would remain open to motorized use.

**Factor 2** - The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety:

There are no significant effects to public health or safety in any of the alternatives. There are inherent risks, however, all individuals take when recreating in any natural environment. Driving OHVs at safe speeds and in safe weather and road/trail conditions is everyone's personal responsibility.

**Factor 3** - Unique characteristics of the geographic area:

Effects are disclosed in the above Issue Statements 2, 9 and 11.

**Factor 4** - The degree to which the effects on the human environment are likely to be high:

Dispersed day-use and primitive camping (described here as recreational activities that occur outside of developed picnic areas or campgrounds) is a popular use of the Spring Mountains NRA. Many individuals and groups prefer to picnic and camp in dispersed and primitive locations rather than in developed facilities. The Forest Service issues recreation special-use permits to groups greater than 75 people in the 8 primitive group camping areas that are shown in Appendix B and that are described below. Some of the alternatives would allow motorized access while some would restrict motorized access to these primitive group camping areas, including:

- Blue Tree: A day use and overnight primitive camping area frequented by equestrian groups. This location can facilitate up to 100 people and 30 vehicles.
- Cold Creek/Camp Bonanza: A day use and overnight primitive camping area that can facilitate up to 75 people and 25 vehicles.
- Wheeler Well: A heavily used day use and overnight primitive camping area that can facilitate up to 100 people and 30 vehicles.
- Macks Canyon (Upper): This is the most highly used primitive group camping area on the Spring Mountains NRA. Many group recreation special-use permits are issued each year for activities at this location. It can facilitate up to 150 people and 50 vehicles.
- Macks Canyon (Lower): A heavily used day use and overnight primitive camping area that can facilitate up to 25 people and 8 vehicles.
- Archey Range: A day use and overnight primitive camping area that can facilitate up to 75 people and 25 vehicles.
- CC Springs (Lovell Wash): A heavily used day use and overnight primitive camping area that can facilitate up to 30 people and 10 vehicles.



- Lovell Wash Gravel Pit: A large and heavily used day use and overnight primitive camping area that can facilitate up to 150 people and 50 vehicles.

Mitigation Measure For All Alternatives: Many areas within primitive day-use and group camping locations on the Spring Mountains NRA have been used for decades for recreation activities that involve vehicle parking. These previously disturbed areas are not shown in detail on the alternative maps and include Blue Tree, Cold Creek/Camp Bonanza, Wheeler Well, Upper Macks Canyon, Lower Macks Canyon, Archery Range, CC Springs (Lovell Wash) and Lovell Wash Gravel Pit. This mitigation would continue to allow vehicles to park in these primitive group camping areas that are shown in Appendix B. Vehicles would be limited to parking on previously disturbed areas where no sensitive plant or animal species are present. Keeping vehicles to these disturbed areas would be accomplished through signing, fencing and using natural barriers as camping area boundaries.



**Permitted group activity at the Upper Macks Canyon  
Primitive Group Camping Area**

**Effects of Alternatives 1,2,3:** There would be no adverse effect to individuals and groups who utilize the 8 primitive group camping areas as they could continue to drive to them and park.

**Effects of Alternative 4:** There would be an adverse effect to individuals and groups who recreate at the Blue Tree, Wheeler Well, and Archery Range primitive group camping locations. The motorized trails that access Blue Tree and Archery Range would be closed to motorized use. The access road to Wheeler Well would remain open, however, some the spur trails off of this road would be closed to motorized use.



**Effects of Alternative 5:** There would be an adverse effect to individuals and groups who recreate at the Wheeler Well and Archery Range primitive group camping areas. The motorized trails that access Archery Range would be closed to motorized use. The access road to Wheeler Well would remain open, however, some the spur trails off of this road would be closed to motorized use.

**Effects of Alternative 6:** There would be no adverse effect to individuals and groups who utilize the 8 primitive group camping areas as they could continue to drive to them and park.

**Factor 5 - The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks:**

This factor is not applicable to this project.

**Factor 6 – The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future decision:** This environmental analysis is solely for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The final decision will have no impact on the management of any other location.

**Factor 7 – Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts:**

The Forest Service Interdisciplinary Team, who conducted this environmental analysis, discussed the possible cumulative effects of this project. Cumulative effects result from the incremental effect of the proposed action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions. The Team reviewed these actions and determined that there may be several actions that result in cumulative effects including:

**Wilderness Designations** – In 1989, the U.S. Congress designated approximately **43,000 acres** of National Forest land as the Mount Charleston Wilderness, all under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service. In 2002, Congress, through the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act, designated two new Wilderness areas and added acreage onto the Mt. Charleston Wilderness including:

- LaMadre Mountain Wilderness that includes **19,404 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction and 27,784 acres under BLM jurisdiction.
- Rainbow Mountain Wilderness that includes **4,815 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction and 20,180 acres under BLM jurisdiction.
- Mt. Charleston Wilderness additions include **12,263 acres** under Forest Service jurisdiction and 2,177 acres under BLM jurisdiction.

Therefore, the total acreage of Wilderness equals 79,482 acres, which is approximately 25% of the entire Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The amount of designated Wilderness in the Spring Mountains NRA is important as a cumulative effect because, by law, motorized and mechanized equipment and vehicles are prohibited in Wilderness.



This increases the protection of natural and cultural resources in these areas from the impacts of vehicles traveling cross-country (see issue statements 2, 6 and 11).

Possible Future Visitor Center and Shuttle Services – The Forest Service is attempting to acquire land in Kyle Canyon for a visitor center and recreation developments. Developments could include a shuttle service for Kyle and Lee Canyons on the east side of the Spring Mountains NRA. These actions may result in an overall decrease in the number of motorized vehicles driven on the Spring Mountains NRA and subsequently decrease natural and cultural resource impacts from motorized vehicle use (see issue statements 2,6 and 11).

Construction Noise - Home and other building construction projects on private land could temporarily increase noise levels. This might be an annoyance to private property residents and people recreating on adjacent National Forest lands (see issue statements 5 and 8).

**Factor 8** – The degree to which the action may adversely effect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources:

Effects are disclosed in the above Issue Statement 6.

**Factor 9** – The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973:

Effects are disclosed in the above Issue Statement 11.

**Factor 10** – Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or other requirements imposed for the protection of the environment:

The **U.S. Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Rule** (Roadless Rule) went into effect on April 14, 2003. The Roadless Rule prohibits road construction and reconstruction in Inventoried Roadless Areas. Road reconstruction is defined as activities that result in realignment or improvement of an existing road. There are approximately 106,644 acres of Inventoried Roadless Area on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. Some of the unofficial motorized trails being evaluated in this planning process occur in these areas. None of the six alternatives are affected by the Roadless Rule as there would be no road construction or reconstruction as part of this project.

All alternatives, except Alternative 2 the no action alternative, are in compliance with the **General Management Plan for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, An Amendment to the Land and Resource Management Plan, Toiyabe National Forest, 1996 (Forest Plan)**. Desired Future Conditions for the Spring Mountains NRA in the



Forest Plan include: recreation opportunities are maintained for Primitive, Semiprimitive Motorized, Roaded Natural and Rural Classes; ecosystem health and function are sustained; riparian vegetation is healthy; soil erosion and compaction are minimized; habitat for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species have been protected, restored, or maintained, and is not fragmented by new development; areas with high biodiversity and/or a number of species of concern are protected from development of facilities and trails. For Management Area 11 – Developed Canyons, the Forest Plan states, “Improvements to existing recreation sites and trailheads improve access to multi-use trail network for equestrians, OHV users and other users”.

All alternatives, except Alternative 2 the no action alternative, are in compliance with the **Conservation Agreement for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, 1998**. The Conservation Agreement states, “Protect habitat of the species of concern from dispersed recreation, e.g. heavy foot traffic, off-road vehicles, mountain bikes... (Section VII, CA-GC-4.7)”.

All alternatives, except Alternative 2 the no action alternative, are in compliance with the **Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, 2000**. (Actions listed in this Conservation Plan are reiterations of actions listed in the Forest Plan.)

### **Factor 11 – Environmental Justice**

Project areas are within a one-hour drive of the City of Las Vegas and the Town of Pahrump. These communities have large populations that encompass many racial and economic groups. None of the six alternatives pose a disproportionately high or adverse effect on minority or low-income communities.

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- US Fish and Wildlife Service List for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, Clark and Nye Counties, Nevada, July 2002.
- US Forest Service Roads Inventory, 2003 US Forest Service INFRA Reports RDLER01P (Linear Events Summary) and RTER001L (List of Routes).



## Agencies and Persons Consulted

Roddy Shepard: Habitat Biologist, State of Nevada Department of Wildlife

Amy LaVoie, Gina  
Glennie & Cynthia  
Martinez: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Patrick Cummings: Elk Biologist, State of Nevada Department of Wildlife

Cold Creek Property  
Owners Association: Individual Property Owners as well as Cold Creek  
Fire Chief Terry Myers

Blake Monk: Nevada United Four Wheelers Association

Donn Siebert: Natural Resource Specialist, U.S. Bureau of  
Land Management

Mountain Springs Citizen's  
Advisory Council:

Debbie Wright: Outdoor Recreation Planner, U.S. Bureau of  
Land Management

Rebecca Palmer: State Historic Preservation Office

S. Nevada Regional  
Trails Partnership:



## Appendix A: Public Comments Received and Forest Service Responses.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Forest Service Response</i>
<i>Adams</i>	Cold Creek Area	There are plenty of open areas between lower Cold Creek and Wheeler Well for off-road users.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects to the Cold Creek area.
	Cold Creek Area	Land between Cold Creek and Mud Springs should be closed to motorized vehicles but kept open for horseback riders, hikers, and bicycles. Motorized vehicles are keeping wild horses and elk out of the area.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects in the Cold Creek Area.
<i>Albrecht</i>	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	Maintain opportunities for motorized recreation.	Factor 1 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails.
	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	There are limited opportunities for the physically challenged.	Factor 2 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails including access for the physically challenged.
<i>Baltz</i>	General Comments	Enjoy the desert and preserve it.	The issue of desert resource preservation is addressed in Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 4.
<i>Barcomb</i>	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Include the impacts of ATVs on wild horses.	Issue Statement 2 and Alternative 5 address effects on wild horses.
<i>Bialecki</i>	Enforcement	Need to have enforcement of the Proposed Action.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and in 2003 hired four new Forest Protection Officers to patrol the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Forest Service is also working through several avenues to continue to increase law enforcement capabilities.
	Close All Motorized Trails	Close the forest to motorized vehicles.	This issue is outside the scope of the project. Alternative 4, however, would only allow vehicles on Forest System Roads on the Spring Mountains NRA.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Noise	Examine noise levels in or near the Wilderness.	This issue is outside the scope of this project as motorized vehicles, by law, are not permitted in Wilderness Areas. Noise issues, however, are addressed in Issue Statements 2 & 5.
	Riparian	Riparian areas should be closed.	This issue is addressed in Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5.
<b>Bull</b>			
	Sanitation-Rest Rooms	No bathrooms exist in the Cold Creek and Willow Creek areas.	This issue is outside the scope of this project.
	Enforcement	No full-time enforcement is available in the Cold Creek area.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and in 2003 hired four new Forest Protection Officers to patrol the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Forest Service is also working through several avenues to continue to increase law enforcement capabilities.
<b>Butler</b>			
	Cold Creek Area	Keep Cold Creek safe from fires.	Forest Service wildfire specialists on the Spring Mountains NRA have documented that there is no evidence to support the issue that OHV use increases fire hazards. On the Spring Mountains NRA most human caused fires in recent years have originated near Forest System Roads where people stop and camp and not near unofficial motorized trails. OHVs are required to have spark arresters when being ridden on the Spring Mountains NRA which would also prevent wildlife starts from OHVs.
	Riparian	Close a 2-3 mile perimeter Around ponds to OHV use.	Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5 address motorized use within 100 feet of riparian areas.
	Recreation Opportunities	Allow OHV use 2-3 miles from ponds.	Factor 1 and Alternative 1 address Providing recreation opportunities on motorized trails
<b>Carlson</b>			
	Private Property & Public Lands Impacts	Nevada Power needs continued access to their power lines for operations and maintenance.	Factor 2 and Alternative 1 address continued motorized access to most existing unofficial motorized trails.
<b>Chipman</b>			



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	General Support	OHVs will not do additional damage to roads that have given access for over a century. Keep roads open for access to public lands for recreation, fire suppression, grazing and more.	Factor 1 and Alternative 1 particularly address these issues. All alternatives, except Alternative 4, would provide many opportunities for OHV riding and other recreational opportunities.
	Resource Damage	Damage is caused by backhoes and dozers used to close roads. They cause more damage than vehicles traveling roads.	This issue is outside the scope of this project as this project does not involve closing roads. Some trails may be closed, however, no trail closures will be accomplished using mechanized equipment. Alternative 1, however, does evaluate keeping the majority of existing unofficial trails open to motorized use.
<b>Claire Toomey</b>	General Comments	The Blue Tree Trails System is not compatible with motorcycle use and this system should be designated into the Forest Trail System.	This issue is outside the scope of the project. Only the no action alternative, alternative 2, would allow OHVs on the Blue Tree area routes.
<b>Clem</b>	Private Property & Public Land Impacts	Trails go through private property.	Issue Statements 5 & 8 and Alternative 5 address possible motorized trail impacts to private property.
	Quality of Life	There is a threat to a way of life.	Issue Statements 5, 7 & 8 and Alternative 5 address motorized trail impacts to adjacent private property.
	General Comments	FS45597 and FS45597A pass through private land and end at the border of the Cold Creek subdivision.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address the issue of unofficial motorized trails within a half mile of private property.
	Private Property & Public Land Impacts	Close the unofficial motorized trail to the west of the Cold Creek subdivision that extends east off of FS45601U.	Issue Statements 5 & 8 and Alternative 5 address possible motorized trail impacts to private property.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Trails are in biodiversity hotspots.	Issue Statement 11 & Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts to biodiversity hotspots.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Close roads that impinge on the elk mating area.	Issue Statement 2 and Alternative 5 address possible impacts to elk.
	General Comments	Keep unlicensed motorized vehicles off main traffic roads.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.



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Name	Description	Comment	Forest Service Response
Air Quality	Air Quality	Close all dirt roads where possible and post signs. All dirt roads add to dust pollution and the erosion of land.	Issue Statements 2 and 3 and Alternative 4 address these issues. The Forest Service agrees that posting is needed and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
Air Quality	Air Quality	OHVs create noise and dust close to homes.	This issue is addressed in Issue Statement 3 and Alternative 5.
Cold Creek Area	Cold Creek Area	Close the unofficial road that heads south from the Cold Creek subdivision that extends into a ravine and ends in dense brush. This road is a fire hazard and causes erosion.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects in the Cold Creek Area.
General Comments	General Comments	Establish and require a displayed ID for off-road vehicles so users can be identified.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.
Cold Creek Area	Cold Creek Area	Put a speed limit of 15mph on trails and post signs. The side of the mountain in the Cold Creek/Willow Creek area is desert terrain and very sensitive. Speed adds to destruction and eliminates trail use by mountain bicycle riders, horses and hikers.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects in the Cold Creek Area.
Mapping Errors	Mapping Errors	Some identified trails do not exist.	There were some mapping errors on the Proposed Action map, including Forest System Roads that were shown within private property in the Cold Creek area that do not exist and the Forest Service has no easements for them. These errors have been corrected. The Forest System Roads shown outside of the private property on National Forest lands are not being addressed in the context of this project which is focused on unofficial motorized trails.
Cold Creek Area	Cold Creek Area	Close all roads in the Cold Creek Biodiversity Hot Spot except paved road FS45202, the gravel road to Willow Creek FS45601, and FS45596 which is needed to access private land.	Issue Statements 8 & 11 and Alternative 5 address effects in biodiversity hotspots and in the Cold Creek Area.
Cold Creek Area	Cold Creek Area	ATV use should be banned in the Cold Creek area.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects in the Cold Creek Area.
Mapping Errors	Mapping Errors	FS 45601 does not exist.	Forest System Road 45601 is the Wheeler Pass Road which is posted on the road as 601.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Wildfire	Trails have been extended into areas with dense brush which could be a fire hazard.	There is no evidence to support the suggestion that trails into dense brush create a fire hazard. This project addresses restricting off-road use.
	General Comments	Close FS45202B and FS45202C. These roads do not form a loop.	This issue is outside the scope of the project as the project is addressing unofficial motorized trails and not Forest System Roads.
	Close All Motorized Trails	Close all unofficial roads that do not have a destination or do not make a loop.	Alternative 4 addresses closing trails to motorized use.
	Resource Damage	In the Willow Springs Biodiversity Hotspot limit the motorized use to only one roadway crossing the riparian area instead of multiple roads.	Issue Statement 11 & Alternative 5 address the impacts to biodiversity hotspots in riparian areas.
	Close All Motorized Trails	Close roads that do not connect to other roads.	Alternative 4 addresses closing trails to motorized use.
	Resource Damage	There is a concern for resource damage.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address natural resource impacts.
	Close All Motorized Trails	Close the unofficial motorized trails to the east of the paved road FS45202 that do not make a loop. This is a burned area that is easily violated by motorized vehicles that extend the roads.	Alternative 4 addresses closing trails to motorized use.
<b>Clinard</b>			
	Education	Provide maps of OHV routes to the public.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
<b>Crowder</b>			
	Recreation Opportunities	Closing trails prevents people with disabilities from enjoying the area.	Factor 1 addresses this issue. All alternatives, except Alternative 4, would provide many opportunities for people with disabilities to access the Spring Mountains NRA on motorized trails and Forest System Roads.
	General Support	All existing motorized trails should remain open.	Factor 1 and Alternative 2 address this option.
	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	A complete ATV system should be developed.	Factor 1 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails.
<b>Deloney</b>			



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	We need recreational trails and pathways.	Factor 2 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails.
	General Comments	The public needs access to public lands.	This issue is addressed in Factor 1 and Alternative 2.
<b>Dixon</b>	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	Handicapped hunters need access.	Factor 1 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails including access for the physically challenged.
<b>Dodrill</b>	Air Quality	Meet EPA dust control standards.	Issue Statement 3 and Alternative 5 address this issue.
	Education	Provide maps on the website and at ATV sales places.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
	Requests	Would like to know the trail mileage for available and eliminated trails.	Table 2.1 provides trail mileage information.
	Education	Trail users do not know about trail availability.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
<b>Engle</b>	Resource Damage	OHV use conflicts with wildlife, causes erosion problems and diminishes scenic value.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
	Close All Motorized Trails	Existing unofficial motorized trails should not remain open to motorized use.	This issue is addressed in Alternative 4 which would allow motorized use on Forest System Roads only.
	Education	Educate the public on correct road use.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
<b>Farrar</b>	General Comments	Connect some of the dead end trails into loops to reduce travel impact.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	General Comments	Would like to see a trail system for motorcycles (40 inch) trails.	This issue is outside the scope of the project as no new roads or trails are being planned.
	Education	Better signage including trail numbers and difficulty rating.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
	Mapping Errors	The trail density in the Mountain Springs Area, Cold Creek Area, and Wheeler Wells area make it impossible to determine which trails are designated for closure using the maps provided.	The Forest Service sent the larger more detailed map to the individual making this comment.
	Sanitation-Rest Rooms	Create permanent or portable restrooms at well-used trail heads or camping areas, such as Cold Creek and Wheeler Well.	This issue is outside the scope of this project.
	General Comments	OHV users prefer more challenging terrain over graded dirt roads.	Alternative 1 would provide OHV opportunities in a variety of challenging terrains.
<b>Feldman</b>	Noise	Motorized vehicles have negative impacts on noise management.	Issue Statements 5 & 8 and Alternative 5 address effects of noise on other Forest users and area residents.
	Air Quality	Motorized vehicles have negative impacts on dust management.	Issue Statement 3 and Alternative 5 address this issue.
	Wilderness Study Areas	Roads into Mt. Stirling and the WSA are illegal.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Wilderness Study Areas	Motorized vehicles have negative impacts on wilderness values.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Determine how roads impact the HCP, IMAs and LMAs.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
	Close All Motorized Trails	Evaluate all roads individually.	This issue is outside the scope of the project as roads are not evaluated, only unofficial motorized trails.
	Land Restoration-Closed Motorized Trails	Identify and rehabilitate duplicate roads.	The issue of duplicate motorized trails is addressed in Issue Statement 9. The issue of trail rehabilitation is outside the scope of the project, however, future planning efforts may include seeding and rehabilitating unofficial motorized trails that are closed to motorized use.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Recreational User Conflicts	Motorized vehicles have negative impacts on recreation opportunities.	Issue Statement 5 and Alternative 5 address possible impacts of motorized use within 1/2 mile of campgrounds, other Forest System trails and picnic areas.
	Riparian	Illegal roads impact riparian areas and springs.	This issue is addressed in Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5.
	Water-Erosion	Motorized vehicles have negative impacts on watershed.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts, including impacts to soils and riparian areas.
	Resource Damage	The Proposed Action does not acknowledge resource damage.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
	Water-Erosion	Motorized vehicles have negative impacts on water quality.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts, including impacts to soils and riparian areas.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Motorized vehicles have negative impacts on sensitive plants and animals.	Issue Statement 11 Alternative 5 addresses possible impacts to sensitive plants and animals.
	Resource Damage	Motorized vehicles have negative impacts on the ecosystem.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Determine how roads impact the permit granted under the Clark County Habitat Conservation	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
	Land Restoration-Closed Motorized Trails	Unofficial roads need to be rehabilitated.	This issue is outside the scope of the project, however, future planning efforts may include seeding and rehabilitating unofficial motorized trails that are closed to motorized use.

**Fitzgibbons**

Cold Creek Area	Close the roads in Cold Creek and Willow Creek. ATVs damage the environment.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects in the Cold Creek Area.
Enforcement	Provide enforcement.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and in 2003 hired four new Forest Protection Officers to patrol the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Forest Service is also working through several avenues to continue to increase law enforcement capabilities.
Private Property & Public Lands Impacts	Close the trails that are accessed through private property in the Cold Creek Area.	Issue Statements 5 & 8 and Alternative 5 address possible motorized trail impacts to private property.
Sanitation-Rest Rooms	Consider installing rest room facilities.	This issue is outside the scope of this project.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Cold Creek Area	Close the trails that dead end at the Cold Creek community.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects in the Cold Creek Area.
	Wildfire	Camping and off-road use increases the fire danger.	There is no evidence to support the suggestion that increased OHV access increases the risk of man-made fires. Fire Management Officers indicate that wildfires have been at locations immediately adjacent to Forest System Roads and County Roads on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, not near motorized trails.
<b>Garcarz</b>	Wilderness Study Areas	The creation of motorized routes into the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area has damaged wilderness values.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Wilderness Study Areas	Allowing illegally created routes into the Mt. Stirling WSA and encouraging them to remain open is unacceptable.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
<b>Garcarz</b>	Wilderness Study Areas	Routes into the WSA violates FLPMA.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Wilderness Study Areas	Close the Mt. Stirling road at the end of the cherry-stem.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Wilderness Study Areas	Monitor the Mt. Stirling WSA for vehicle use.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Wilderness Study Areas	Unofficial roads lead into the Mt. Stirling wilderness.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Wilderness Study Areas	Routes into the WSA damage the wilderness.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Mapping Errors	Roads into Mt. Charleston are illegal.	There was a mapping error on the Proposed Action map that showed an unofficial motorized trail in the Mt. Charleston Wilderness. This error has been corrected.
	Wilderness Study Areas	Have a plan for closing and restoring closed roads.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Monitoring	Provide monthly monitoring.	Mitigation measures in this Environmental Assessment would provide for the monitoring of impacts to natural and cultural resources and the control of noxious weeds and invasive plants.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Wilderness Study Areas	The unofficial route into Wood Canyon extends into the WSA.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	General Comments	Provide training for Forest Service personnel who will be Managing WSAs.	The issue of routes in the Mt. Sterling Wilderness Study area is addressed in Issue Statement 1 and Alternative 3. Due to the significance of this issue, Forest Service personnel have researched BLMs management direction for Wilderness Study Areas as well as laws pertaining to Wilderness Study Areas as they relate to the Spring Mountains NRA.
	Wilderness Study Areas	Do not assume existing routes are acceptable.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Inventoried Roadless Areas	Retract roads into the roadless area. They result in fragmentation.	Issue Statement 9 and Alternative 6 address the effects of routes in the Inventoried Roadless Areas.
	Wilderness Study Areas	The unofficial routes off Wheeler Well are illegal.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
<b>Great Bason</b>			
	Resource Damage	Engineer trails to be sustainable under long term usage.	This issue is outside the scope of the project. In this project motorized trails will not be constructed or engineered.
<b>Hanson</b>			
	Resource Damage	Close unofficial roads that are causing irreparable damage to the environment.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
<b>Hiatt</b>			
	Recreational User Conflicts	Unauthorized OHV trails interfere with non-motorized visitors enjoyment of the area.	Issue Statement 5 and Alternative 5 address possible impacts of motorized use within 1/2 mile of campgrounds, other Forest System trails and picnic areas.
	Resource Damage	Unauthorized OHV trails degrade Forest health.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
	General Comments	There is a proliferation of unauthorized OHV trails.	This issue is addressed in all the Alternatives, except Alternative 2.
	Riparian	Motor vehicle use causes permanent damage in riparian and wetland areas and should be off-limits to OHV use.	This issue is addressed in Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5.
	Wilderness Study Areas	There are additional unauthorized motorized trails inside designated wilderness which are not shown on the Proposed Action Map.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Wilderness Study Areas	All motorized trails in designated wilderness must be closed.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Unauthorized OHV trails affect endemic and rare plant species.	Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5 address effects to sensitive species.
	Riparian	OHVs should not be allowed to damage spring areas and their associated rare and sensitive plants.	Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5 address effects to riparian areas.
	Wilderness Study Areas	The route from Wheeler Well toward U.S. 95 should be closed. Allowing a motorized trail to extend into this area is a violation of the Interim Management Guidelines for Wilderness Study Areas.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	General Support	Agree with contain and mitigate.	Thank you for your comment.
	General Support	All motorized travel must be on designated routes only. These routes need to be designated to be sustainable and do not cause increased erosion or resource damage.	Thank you for your comment. All alternatives, except Alternative 2, keep motorized use on Forest System Roads and designated trails and end off-road motorized use.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Unauthorized OHV trails disturb wildlife.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address effects to wildlife.
<b>Hoversten</b>			
	Noise	OHVs destroy quiet and create litter.	Issue Statements 5 & 8 and Alternative 5 addresses effects of noise on other Forest users and area residents.
	Cold Creek Area	There should be no ATV use in Cold Creek.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects to the Cold Creek area.
	Cold Creek Area	Cold Creek will become another dust tract.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects to the Cold Creek area.
	Resource Damage	Protect the unique characteristics of the Mojave Desert.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
	Monitoring	Include monitoring to determine additional closures.	Mitigation measures in this Environmental Assessment would provide for the monitoring of impacts to natural and cultural resources and the control of noxious weeds and invasive plants.
<b>Jarrell</b>			
	Mapping Errors	Forest System Road 45571B is not an official motorized trail as in the Proposed Action map.	This mapping error has been corrected.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Mapping Errors	Forest System Road 45543 is not an official motorized trail as in the Proposed Action map.	This mapping error has been corrected.
	Mapping Errors	Forest System Road 45552 is not an official motorized trail as in the Proposed Action map.	This mapping error has been corrected.
	Mapping Errors	Forest System Road 45588 is not an official motorized trail as in the Proposed Action map.	This mapping error has been corrected.
	Mapping Errors	Forest System Road 45531C is not an official motorized trail as in the Proposed Action map.	This mapping error has been corrected.
	Mapping Errors	Forest System Road 45531B is not an official motorized trail as in the Proposed Action map.	This mapping error has been corrected.

*Lindsenbardt*

Wilderness Study Areas	Keep ATVs out of the wilderness.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
Private Property & Public Lands Impacts	Trespassers cross her private property.	Issue Statements 5 & 8 and Alternative 5 address possible motorized trail impacts to private property.
General Comments	Put ATV users (off-rovers) where they will have no impact.	Alternative 4 evaluates keeping OHVs on Forest System Roads only.
General Comments	Questions ATV use on National Forest Land.	Alternative 4 evaluates keeping OHVs on Forest System Roads only.
Noise	Do a noise analysis.	Issue Statements 5 & 8 and Alternative 5 addresses effects of noise on other Forest users and area residents.
Air Quality	Keep ATVs 30-35 miles from the cities air-quality area.	Issue Statement 3 and Alternative 5 address this issue.
Enforcement	Provide enforcement.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and in 2003 hired four new Forest Protection Officers to patrol the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Forest Service is also working through several avenues to continue to increase law enforcement capabilities.
Enforcement	We need a solid base for policing and containing off-rovers.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and in 2003 hired four new Forest Protection Officers to patrol the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Forest Service is also working through several avenues to continue to increase law enforcement capabilities.



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**Name Description Comment Forest Service Response**

Recreational User Conflicts  
Keep ATVs in 1-3 spots where they don't impact hiking.

Issue Statement 5 and Alternative 5 address possible impacts of motorized use within 1/2 mile of campgrounds, other Forest System trails and picnic areas.

**Moats**

Cold Creek Area  
The public should not be led to believe they have access to the Forest System roads that are in the private road system in the Cold Creek Canyon Homeowners Association.  
There were some mapping errors on the Proposed Action map including Forest System Roads that were shown within private property in the Cold Creek area that do not exist and the Forest Service has no easements for them. These errors have been corrected. In addition, Issue 8 and Alternative 5 address effects in the Cold Creek area.

Private Property & Public Lands Impacts  
Trails should not enter private property. This is an invitation to break down barriers and fences and trespass.  
Issue Statements 5, 7 & 8 and Alternative 5 address motorized trail impacts to adjacent private property.

General Comments  
No trails have been designated for hiking, biking or horseback riding.  
This issue is outside the scope of the project. Future planning efforts will address hiking, equestrian and mountain biking trails.

Mapping Errors  
Red lined roads are shown on the map with no legal access to them.  
Some of these were mapping errors that have been corrected. Others are addressed in Alternative 5 which would close unofficial motorized trails within a 1/2 mile of private property to OHV use.

**Mojave Southern**

Resource Damage  
Engineer trails to be sustainable under long term usage.  
This issue is outside the scope of the project. In this project motorized trails will not be constructed.

**Mojave Southern**

Education  
Educate OHV users.  
The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.

General Comments  
Require OHV registration.  
This issue is outside the scope of the project.



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Name	Description	Comment	Forest Service Response
	Education	Notify ATV dealers about the Proposed Action.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
	Education	Provide adequate signage for educational purposes.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
	General Comments	Charge an entry fee.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.
	General Comments	Consider the RS2477 issue.	This issue is outside the scope of the project, however, the effects on historic routes are addressed in Issue Statement 1 and Alternatives 1 & 3.
<i>Monk</i>	Wilderness Study Areas	There are roads in the Mt. Stirling WSA that are to remain open (Wheeler Well, Big Timber, Courger Springs, etc.)	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	Water-Erosion	Improvements can be made to roads that have a water crossing so they can remain open.	This issue is outside the scope of the project. In this project motorized trails will not be constructed or reconstructed.
	General Comments	These roads have been used by pioneers since 1881 and are recorded with Clark and Nye County and with the State of Nevada. These roads and trails are still used by the public on a weekly basis.	Effects on historic routes are addressed in Issue Statement 1 and Alternatives 1 & 3.
	General Comments	Carpenter Canyon is to remain open to the end.	This issue is addressed in Factor 1 and Alternative 1.
	General Comments	Make sure all R.S. 2477 right-of-ways are left to the county to decide.	This issue is outside the scope of the project, however, the effects on historic routes are addressed in Issue Statement 1 and Alternatives 1 & 3.
	General Comments	Cannot close unofficial motorized trails to motorized use.	This issue is addressed Factor 1 and Alternatives 1 and 2.
	Wilderness Study Areas	The unofficial motorized trail through the Mt. Stirling WSA is a historic road.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
<i>Moran</i>	General Comments	The Wheeler Pass road is in terrible condition. Fire engines can't to up it and it restricts fire engine access.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Cold Creek Area	Close the area around the Cold Creek subdivision to all vehicles.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects to the Cold Creek area.
	Cold Creek Area	The Proposed Action map shows Forest Service roads coming off private roads that come through the Cold Creek subdivision. This encourages ATVs in the subdivision where they are not allowed.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects to the Cold Creek area.
	General Comments	A log structure has been constructed to the southeast of the subdivision and is a fire hazard.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.
	Resource Damage	Unofficial roads run parallel to existing roads.	This issue is outside the scope of this project as it addresses unofficial motorized trails, not roads. Alternative 4, however, addresses closing trails to motorized use.
	Wilderness Study Areas	There are vehicle intrusions into the wilderness off Wheeler Pass Road.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
	General Comments	Keep FS45597 blocked to motorized use.	This issue is outside the scope of the project as this project addresses unofficial motorized trails and not Forest System Roads.
	General Comments	County road maintenance is poor south of the subdivision.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.
	Recreational User Conflicts	There is a safety hazard in the Cold Creek area between OHVs and other vehicles.	Issue Statement 8, Factor 2 and Alternative 5 address effects on safety in the Cold Creek Area.
	Land Restoration-Closed Motorized Trails	Rehabilitate existing roads.	This issue is outside the scope of the project, however, future planning efforts may include seeding and rehabilitating unofficial motorized trails that are closed to OHV use.
	Health & Safety	OHVs drive too fast and create a speed hazard.	This issue is addressed in Factor 2. There are no significant effects to public health in the alternatives.
<b>Myers</b>	Enforcement	Provide enforcement.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and in 2003 hired four new Forest Protection Officers to patrol the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Forest Service is also working through several avenues to continue to increase law enforcement capabilities.



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Name	Description	Comment	Forest Service Response
	Wildfire	Camping and off-road use in the Cold Creek area will increase fire danger and medical response needs.	There is no evidence to support the suggestion that increased OHV access increases the risk of man-made fires. Fire Management Officers indicate that wildfires have been at locations immediately adjacent to Forest System Roads and County Roads on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, not near motorized trails.
	Cold Creek Area	Some trails cannot be accessed without entering private property in Cold Creek. These trails should be taken from the plan or make a connecting trail through public lands.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects in the Cold Creek Area and other private properties.
	Cold Creek Area	Some Forest System roads and unofficial motorized trails that dead end at private property in the Cold Creek area should be eliminated from the plan to keep unnecessary traffic out of the community.	Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5 address effects to the Cold Creek area.
	General Comments	There is a need for a combined Forestry and Cold Creek fire department station.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.
	Sanitation-Rest Rooms	Consider restroom facilities in the Cold Creek area.	This issue is outside the scope of this project.
<i>Petell</i>	General Comments	Eliminate the proposal to further open motorized trails in the Horseshuttem Area as redlined in map.	This is outside the scope of the project. The Horsshuttem Area is accessed via Forest System Roads that are not being evaluated in this project. The unofficial motorized trail south of the area, however, is being evaluated in Alternative 6.
<i>Petrell</i>	General Comments	Maintain the Carpenter Canyon Road and construct a trailhead and campground with restrooms and amenities.	This issue is outside the scope of the project. Future planning efforts will address hiking, equestrian and mountain biking trails.
	General Comments	Maintain the Trout Canyon Road and construct a trailhead and campground with restrooms and amenities.	This issue is outside the scope of the project. Future planning efforts will address hiking, equestrian and mountain biking trails.
<i>Pixley</i>	Heritage Resources	Protect archaeological resources.	Issue Statement 6 and Alternative 5 address effects to cultural resources.
	Riparian	Protect water quality and riparian areas.	This issue is addressed in Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Noxious Weeds	Analyze noxious weeds and the introduction of exotic plants.	This issue is addressed in Issue Statement 10 and Alternative 4.
	Water-Erosion	Prevent soil compaction and damage. This affects plants.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address effects to soil and vegetation.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	ATVs may kill animals (road kill) and increase hunting, poaching, trapping and harassment.	Issue Statement 2 and Alternative 5 address effects to wildlife.
	Close All Motorized Trails	Supports the prevention of new unofficial trails.	All the alternatives, except Alternative 2, prevent new unofficial trails from being created.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Animals may be affected by noise and vibrations.	Issue Statement 2 and Alternative 5 address noise effects to wildlife.
	Air Quality	Dust and pollutants from vehicles harm native plants.	Issue Statement 3 and Alternative 5 address this issue.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Wildlife is affected by unrestricted access that may cause a deficiency in snags and larger downed wood because of firewood gathering.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Protect sensitive, endangered and threatened species.	Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5 address possible impacts to sensitive, endangered and threatened
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Protect endemic plants, animals and hot-spots.	Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5 address possible impacts to sensitive plants and animals.
	Resource Damage	Consider the cumulative effects as ATV use increases.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts. Cumulative effects are considered for all issues in this analysis.
	Wildfire	ATVs may increase man-made fires.	There is no evidence to support the suggestion that increased OHV access increases the risk of man-made fires. Fire Management Officers indicate that wildfires have been at locations immediately adjacent to Forest System Roads and County Roads on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, not near motorized trails.
	Enforcement	Supports a total ban on ATVs in the NRA because they can't be controlled.	In 2003 the Forest Service hired four new Forest Protection Officers to patrol the Spring Mountains NRA. The Forest Service is also working through several avenues to continue to increase law enforcement capabilities.



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Name	Description	Comment	Forest Service Response
	Wildfire	Increase access increases the risk of man-made fires.	There is no evidence to support the suggestion that increased OHV access increases the risk of man-made fires. Fire Management Officers indicate that wildfires have been at locations immediately adjacent to Forest System Roads and County Roads on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, not near motorized trails.
	Inventoried Roadless Areas	Habitat fragmentation can be caused by roads.	Issue Statement 9 and Alternative 6 address habitat fragmentation.
<i>Rekshynskyj</i>			
	Private Property & Public Lands Impacts	The trail to Red Rock does not stop in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.	Issue Statement 7 and Alternative 5 address the effects of motorized trails leading into the Red Rock National Conservation Area.
	Private Property & Public Lands Impacts	There are identified routes in the Red Rock National Conservation Area.	Issue Statement 7 and Alternative 5 address the effects of motorized trails leading into the Red Rock National Conservation Area.
<i>Salo</i>			
	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	All forest visitors will benefit by the implementation of a reasonable multiple-use alternative that provides for motorized access and motorized recreation.	Factor 2 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails.
	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	The continued reduction of multiple-use, motorized access and motorized recreation opportunities is grossly out of step with the needs of the public.	Factor 2 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails.
	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	The protection of the natural environment should be balanced with the needs of the human environment.	Factor 2 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails.
	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	Multiple use visitors include physically challenged visitors who must use wheeled vehicles to visit public lands.	Factor 2 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails including access for the physically challenged.
	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	OHV recreation provides the opportunity for a recreational experience for all types of people; to strengthen family relationships; to experience and respect the environment; to participate in healthy and enjoyable sport.	Factor 2 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails.



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Name	Description	Comment	Forest Service Response
<i>Sarles</i>	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	The project lands were designated as multiple-use lands.	Factor 2 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails.
	Resource Damage	Concern for destruction to scenery.	Issue Statement 4 addresses visual quality. Alternative 4 evaluates closing trails to motorized use.
	Resource Damage	Dirt bikers are trashing vegetation that causes land erosion and creates dust bowls.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
	General Comments	Restrict the use of public lands by OHVs.	This issue is addressed in all of the Alternatives, except Alternative 2.
	Enforcement	Need enforcement and severe penalties.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and in 2003 hired four new Forest Protection Officers to patrol the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Forest Service is also working through several avenues to continue to increase law enforcement capabilities.
	Education	Need established marked trails with posted regulations and traffic controls.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
<i>Shepard</i>	General Support	Agree with the Forest Service that springs and creeks, designated wilderness, biologically significant areas, cultural resource areas, areas subject to soil erosion and compaction need to be protected.	These issues are addressed in Issue Statements 1, 2, 6, & 11 and Alternative 5. Wilderness areas are by law not accessible to motorized vehicles.
	Water-Erosion	OHVs cause accelerated soil erosion.	Issue Statement 2 and Alternative 5 address effects to soil.
	General Comments	There is a danger of rolling OHVs.	Safety Issues are addressed in Factor 2.
	Resource Damage	Severe habitat degradation occurs in heavy use areas.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts.
	Resource Damage	Motorized trails will not stay narrow but will widen over time.	Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 4 address natural resource impacts and closing trails to motorized use.



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Name	Description	Comment	Forest Service Response
	Enforcement	Should place a special emphasis on monitoring and enforcement.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and in 2003 hired four new Forest Protection Officers to patrol the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Forest Service is also working through several avenues to continue to increase law enforcement capabilities. Mitigation measures in this Environmental Assessment would provide for the monitoring of impacts to natural and cultural resources and the control of noxious weeds and invasive plants.
	Education	Clearly sign roads and trails that are open or closed.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
	Private Property & Public Lands Impacts	The Nevada Division of Wildlife needs continued access to wildlife guzzlers. (per Nevada Division of Wildlife guzzler map)	Issue Statement 12 and Alternative 1 address continued motorized access to wildlife guzzlers.
	Health & Safety	Trails used by OHVs may, in certain situations, cause greater risk to human safety and may impact the environment on service designated roads.	This issue is addressed in Factor 2. There are no significant effects to public health in any alternative.
	Private Property & Public Lands Impacts	Coordinate with BLM to ensure consistency relative to open/close status for roads and trails when crossing agency	Issue Statement 7 and Alternative 5 address the issue of motorized trails leading into the Red Rock National Conservation Area.
	Monitoring	Requests an annual review of OHV management and usage, impact assessments and appropriate adaptive management actions.	Mitigation measures in this Environmental Assessment would provide for the monitoring of impacts to natural and cultural resources and the control of noxious weeds and invasive plants.
	Land Restoration-Closed Motorized Trails	Close non-designated roads using railroad ties, earthen berms, boulders and vegetation to lessen visual impacts.	This issue is outside the scope of the project, however, future planning efforts may include seeding and rehabilitating unofficial motorized trails that are closed to motorized use.
<i>Siebert</i>	Wilderness Study Areas	Any area designated as a Bureau of Land Management WSA shall be managed to protect it's wilderness character until Congress designated it as wilderness or releases it from further wilderness consideration.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Wilderness Study Areas	Concerns with designating motorized routes within the Mt. Stirling WSA.	Issue Statement 1 & Alternative 3 evaluate routes in the Wilderness Study Area.
<i>Smuckler</i>	Education	Signs are needed to indicate where motorized vehicles can and cannot be ridden.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
	Enforcement	Proper law enforcement is needed.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and in 2003 hired four new Forest Protection Officers to patrol the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Forest Service is also working through several avenues to continue to increase law enforcement capabilities.
	Riparian	No trails through riparian areas.	Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts to riparian areas..
<i>SM Vol. Assoc.</i>	Education	The Forest Service needs to provide "Private Property Ahead" signs.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
	Education	Educate the local communities on native plants.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
	Education	The public needs to know where they can and cannot drive	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
<i>SM Vol. Assoc.</i>	Riparian	Close or relocate the trails in the Deer Creek area.	This issue is addressed in Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5.
	Recreation Opportunities & Accessibility	Loop trails and keep ATVs and motorcycles on trails.	Factor 1 and Alternative 1 address providing OHV recreational opportunities on motorized trails.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	General Comments	Install a trail gate system that allows mountain bikes, horses and fire engines through along the trails.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.
	General Comments	Consider a future road connection between Deer Creek and Lucky Strike Canyon.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.
	Close All Motorized Trails	Close routes around Cold Creek, Willow Creek and Wheeler Well.	This issue is addressed in Issue Statement 8 and Alternative 5.
	General Comments	Keep equestrians and hikers restricted to designated routes.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.
	Inventoried Roadless Areas	Close motorized use in the roadless area near Mountain Springs.	Issue Statement 9 and Alternative 6 address the effects of routes in the Inventoried Roadless Areas.
	General Comments	Keep mountain bikes on roads and make this part of the	This issue is outside the scope of the project.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Construct a parking or turn-around area in Carpenter Creek, before the creek, and allow only hikers past this area.	Factor 1 and Alternative 4 address closing trails to motorized use, especially in Carpenter Canyon.
	Inventoried Roadless Areas	Keep designated roadless area pristine.	Issue Statement 9 and Alternative 6 address the effects of routes in the Inventoried Roadless Areas.
	General Comments	Look at a bicycle only trail to Deer Creek.	This issue is outside the scope of the project.
	General Comments	Mountain bike locations should be part of this analysis.	This issue is outside the scope of the project. Future planning efforts will address hiking, equestrian and mountain biking trails.
	General Comments	In the next steps of the transportation planning process make long loop motorized trails.	This issue is outside the scope of the project. Future planning efforts may address this issue.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	ATVs and motorcycles are causing environmental damage, especially to endemic plants.	Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5 address possible natural resource impacts to plants and the environment.



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	Air Quality	ATVs and motorcycles are creating dust hazards.	Issue Statement 3 and Alternative 5 address the effects of this issue.
	Inventoried Roadless Areas	Keep designated roadless areas as pristine as possible and don't permit motorized use.	Issue Statement 9 and Alternative 6 address the effects of routes in the inventoried roadless areas.
	General Support	The Forest Service is on the right track with this project.	Thank you for your comment.
<b>Sprowl</b>	Heritage Resources	Recommends several routes that Should not remain open to OHV Use for cultural site protection.	Issue Statement 6 and Alternative 5 address effects to cultural resources.
<b>S.H.P.O.</b>	General Support	The SHPO supports the U.S. Forest Service's efforts to reduce the impact of unofficial motorized trails.	Thank you for your comment.
<b>Stoneking</b>	Quality of Life	Protect the tranquility of the area.	Issue Statements 5, 7 & 8 and Alternative 5 address motorized trail impacts to adjacent private property.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Protect sensitive areas including endangered plants, animals and birds.	Issue Statement 11 and Alternative 5 address effects to threatened, sensitive and endangered plants and animals.
	General Comments	Hope there is not too much expansion of motorized trails.	All of the alternatives, except Alternative 2, would stop the expansion of any new unofficial motorized trails.
<b>Toomey</b>	General Comments	Motorcycle use is not compatible to the Blue Tree Trail	This issue is outside the scope of the project. Only the no action alternative, alternative 2, would allow OHVs on the Blue Tree area routes.
<b>Trinko</b>			



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Forest Service Response</b>
	General Support	The map presents a good faith intent to work with OHVers.	Thank you for your comment.
	General Support	The Proposed Action will not negatively impact OHV opportunities.	Factor 1 addresses this issue. All alternatives, except Alternative 4, would provide many opportunities for OHV riding. The effects analysis in Chapter 3 shows the differences in OHV riding opportunities.
<b>U.S.F. &amp; W.S.</b>			
	Inventoried Roadless Areas	Concerned about motorized trails that create unnecessary fragmentation or are redundant	These issues are address in Issue Statement 9 and Alternative 6.
	Plants-Biodiversity Hot Spots-Wildlife	Protect sensitive species and their habitats especially in riparian areas or near spring courses, biodiversity hotspots, near sensitive species locations.	These issues are addressed in Issue Statement 2 and 11 and Alternative 5.
<b>Valley Electric</b>			
	General Support	Valley Electric has no conflicts with the proposed action.	Thank you for contacting us about this project.
<b>Van Remortel</b>			
	Land Restoration-Closed Motorized Trails	Remove dirt bikes and ATVs from the Mud Springs Trail off of Macks Canyon Road.	This issue is addressed in Alternative 4.
	Education	Need bomb proof signs and a public awareness campaign to halt the desecration of riparian zones.	The Forest Service agrees with this comment and is pursuing opportunities to provide educational information about OHV use on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
<b>Zimmerman</b>			
	Recreational User Conflicts	ATVs negatively impact residents, wildlife, hikers and	Issue Statement 5 and Alternative 5 address possible impacts of motorized use within 1/2 mile of campgrounds, other Forest System trails and picnic areas. Issue Statements 5 & 8 and Alternative 5 address possible motorized trail impacts to private property. Issue Statements 2 & 11 and Alternative 5 address effects to wildlife.



Appendix B

Spring Mountains National Recreation Area  
Dispersed Group Campsite Locations

(Groups with more than 75 people need to have a special-use permit)

